

invidious, I came back impressed with the idea that while the institution in Sydney, which has been most richly endowed by private beneficence, is far ahead of ours in magnitude, yet, as regards the equipment and general work that is being done in the institution over which Professor Scott so ably presides, this Board has reason to be highly satisfied with what has been accomplished. The account began with a credit of £1,660, which increased to £2,084 at the end of the year, but the whole of this will be absorbed during the year by plant and equipment which has been ordered for the new Hydraulic Laboratory, which it is expected will be in working-order for the first term of next year.

The enrolments of students attending the lectures at the School of Engineering for the first terms are as follows :—

1907	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	571
1908	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	507
1909	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	489

The following table shows the actual number of matriculated and non-matriculated students attending the school for the years 1905, 1906, 1907, and 1908 :—

Year.	Matriculated.	Non-matriculated.	Total.
1905	53—8 art students ..	124	177
1906	44—8	116	160
1907	52—20	144	196
1908	39—10	134	173

PUBLIC LIBRARY.

This account, which is one of the most difficult to work of those under the control of the Board, closes the year with substantially the same debit balance as at the end of 1907. The difficulty of maintaining so large and expensive a concern with the comparatively small funds at the disposal of the Board is increasingly felt. The efforts made to induce the City Council to assist this worthy institution did not meet with the success they deserved. By utilizing a portion of the Gammack Trust money for the circulating department, the general position of the account has been considerably improved, but I do not think the library can possibly be expanded as it ought to be with the funds at our disposal, bearing in mind the responsibility the Board has to other institutions, which have a clearer and more direct claim upon us. The policy which the Board has embarked on, of giving the public the use of the circulating library and subscribers' reading-room at 5s. per year (which, I may remark, is the sum charged for use of the so-called free municipal library at Wellington, an institution which I believe costs the City Council over £3,000 per year) is not likely to increase the revenue. On the other hand, the benefit of the reduction is fully appreciated by the public, as shown by the large increase of subscribers which has taken place during the first four months of the present year. I trust the time may come when the City Council will realize its duty and responsibility both to the public library and the Museum, by assisting both of them, as they are certainly leading attractions to this city.

MUSEUM.

The Museum Account, which opened with a debit balance of £97, closed with a debit of £329. But this sum is more than accounted for by the facts that during the year specimens of the value of £251 were purchased, a strong-room erected which cost £114, and £200 expended from the Board's funds for the purchase of the Okarito whale-skeleton. The policy which was initiated during the year of allowing the Curator, Mr. E. R. Waite, to make a tour of the North Island with a view to purchasing Maori specimens is the right one. Our Museum should be strong in its collection of things of historical and antique value relating to the fast-disappearing race who occupied this Island before the Europeans. I trust that this policy will be steadily pursued, and that the Canterbury Museum will take a high place in the direction indicated.

It would be an excellent idea if the Board were to establish in connection with the Museum a section relating to the early colonists. In the course of another generation all of those who took part in the settlement of Canterbury will have passed away. Many records, pictures, photographs, &c., of the city in its early days, and of those who established it, should be at the present time procurable, and it would, in my opinion, be a very gracious and wise policy if the Board were to establish a section at the Museum where such things could be kept on exhibition, so that those who came after us would be able, so far as possible, to picture to themselves exactly what Christchurch and the province generally looked like in the early days of colonization.

While in Sydney I was shown over the great Mitchell library, now approaching completion, and was greatly interested in seeing the manuscripts that have been preserved. There are to be seen documents from whatever source obtainable, collected, bound, and indexed, referring to the earliest stages of the history of all the Australasian colonies, New Zealand included. If a collection were obtained of the letters received by men like Sir George Grey, Sir Frederick Whitaker, Hon. William Rolleston, Sir John Hall, Sir Harry Atkinson, Right Hon. Mr. Seddon, and others, they would be of enormous interest to the people, and would provide an unfailing source of inspiration to the future