

Its reading desks are, during a portion of the day, overcrowded, and accommodation is only provided with difficulty. Readers are now continually attracted from distant points in the country and the United States to consult its rare books.

It is in the light of these facts that I regret to call your attention to the action of the City Council in reducing our estimates by the sum of \$5,000. These estimates were based on the most economical running expenses, including a judicious expenditure for books, and were prepared with the utmost care. The reduction made left us without sufficient funds to properly maintain the Library and its Branches throughout the year, and in November a Committee of your Board waited upon the Board of Control to inform them that unless a grant of at least \$2,500 was made, that they would be compelled at once to close two of the Branch Libraries. It was also pointed out that as the Board's estimates amounted to a less sum than the limit permitted by statute, the Council was exceeding its powers in reducing it. The Board of Control acceded to the request of your Committee, and in December placed the amount at their disposal, but so late in the season that the Chief Librarian reported, that the considerable additions to the Library contemplated when the estimates were struck early in 1898, could not be made before the 31st December, and the sum of \$1,800 has accordingly been carried to a special account, to cover purchases compelled to be made in 1899, which should be practically charged to the expenditure of 1898. I must add that the acquisition of books for the Central Library and Branches, but more particularly for the Central Library, is in my opinion quite as important a part of your Board functions as the payment of salaries and the maintenance of the Branches, and the annual estimates, therefore, must always contain a proper item for this purpose. Any curtailment of the appropriation means a reduction of the allowance for books, because all

other in  
fixed cl

It i  
Secreta  
seized  
carried  
display  
Mechan  
would b  
Mechan  
the year  
of the

In  
inconve  
formall  
Meeting  
togethe  
of the  
change

In  
good-w  
of the B  
Brown,  
carry o  
nearly c

Th  
C. Eger  
late Mr  
of Publ  
part in

Th