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Editorial Comment

Municipal Aids to Culture

From the somewhat forbidding-looking columns of figures in the latest Municipal Handbook we learn a few pleasing things about municipal policy. The community rightly looks to its civic organisation for the provision of means of culture and recreation which are the right of everyone, but which are beyond the average individual's means. Parks, picture galleries, and libraries must be the concern of the municipality, and we think the New Zealand borough councils show, in the main, a very enlightened attitude towards these amenities of life. This conclusion comes of studying the Municipal Handbook statistics which show that the expenditure by boroughs upon streets and footways amounts to £645,878, while the money spent on parks, gardens, town halls, libraries, art galleries and places of public recreation in one year totalled £108,263. So that for £6 spent on purely utilitarian objects—which must come first—our civic governors appropriated £1 for the higher things of life. Perhaps it is not fair to the chief cities, with their widely differing population, to gauge their comparative interest in libraries, parks and art galleries by their expenditure, therefore it is not for the purpose of making odious comparisons that we quote the amounts spent by them on things which are valued by those who love beauty and knowledge. The yearly expenditure on parks, gardens, town halls, libraries, art galleries and places of public recreation in the four chief centres is shown as follows:—

Auckland	£44,544
Wellington	8,822
Christchurch	779
Dunedin	9,074

Christchurch is fortunate in its endowments, therefore the ratepayers are not called on to foot the bill for the maintenance of the chief beauty spots.