

a continuation, though a diminishing one, of the nation-wide unemployment situation—and public construction of this kind will employ thousands.

I am certain that the people of Oakland would back such a bond issue for the free library practically unanimously. The demand for books is daily increasing. Due to traffic conditions parents do not care to have their children go far to reach the free library service. It is the duty of the city, and I am confident the people will concur with my belief, that this most important facility for education and recreation should be expanded and brought within the reach of all.

At the close of 1929 over 65,000 men, women and children of Oakland held library cards—an increase of 4,000 cardholders over the year before. At the same time the book circulation gain over the year before was something like 250,000 volumes. This will indicate something of how present library facilities are crowded and how necessary is the expansion planned.

### C. W. Gibson Gives Buildings and Books

During the year five new branch libraries were opened by the board. Two of these, the Gibson Branch, in the Columbia Park district, and the Montclair Branch, are gifts of C. W. Gibson of Rockridge and of the Homes and Children's Alliance, a philanthropic organization founded by Mr. Gibson. The Montclair Branch is of the so-called "neighborhood type" of structure, and a beautiful addition to the district. Other branches established are the Lockwood, Lakeview, and the Telegrove—the latter on Grove near Thirty-fourth Street.

I wish to take this opportunity of conveying the city's thanks to Mr. Gibson. It is a joy to know that Oakland has such a thoughtful and public-spirited citizen, and a pleasure to have this opportunity of making public acknowledgment of his gifts to the city in which he has his home.

To those members of the Library Board retired in the past year, Mr. William Eggleston and Mrs. Myrtle Fieberling, who for long have given their services gratis to aid in the administration of this work, I wish, on behalf of the city, to give my thanks. To the new board members, Mrs. Virginia E. Brown and Dr. W. J. McCracken, whom I appointed to fill vacancies occurring during the year, let me give the city's welcome. I am happy to state that the board of today is a most harmonious unit, public spirited, efficient and industrious. It is developing the plans, above noted, for library building expansion, and I am sure the public will, within a year or so, give the entire group a vote of confidence and appreciation.

## LEGAL DEPARTMENT

### Cases Concluded in 1929

The people of Oakland are to be congratulated on the thorough and efficient manner in which the Legal Department, under the leadership of City Attorney Preston Higgins, is caring for the city's interests. The city in the past year has participated in 41 important litigations, emerging successfully in all but one case—in which, however, a settlement not entirely unsatisfactory to the city has been recommended. I am happy to state, too, that whereas, two years ago, there were 42 cases pending, with a court age ranging from one to five years, none of the present pending litigation is over six months old except where technical defense on the part of opposition has made this circumstance.

The year of 1929 was one of the busiest years in the history of the City Attorney's office. In addition to the increased requirements occasioned by the growth of the city, the year was marked by many important rate hearings, particularly that of the telephone rates. The high post-war costs which formed a basis of valuation and rates have been gradually settling, to the end that a readjustment has become necessary. It has ever been my contention, and it is that of the City Attorney's office also, that the movement in utility rates should be downward, but we have serious difficulties convincing the State Railroad Commission on this economic truth.