

9 of all interested in the formation of an exclusively literary and scientific institution at Christchurch and suggesting as a tentative title "The Christchurch Athenaeum."⁽³⁾ A well attended meeting established the proposed society which immediately became the target of uninformed criticism from a number of prominent citizens who were at great pains to point out to all that the movement was in direct opposition to the Colonists' Society and as such should not be tolerated under any circumstances. One correspondent to the "Times" even went so far as to suggest, or rather insist, that it appeared as if a society comprising the mass of the people was not respectable enough for some few exclusives.

Admirable as the Colonists' Society was for the promotion of social intercourse in a new settlement by catering for a wide variety of interests, it was unreasonable for its protagonists to insist that it should preclude the establishment of new societies for specific purposes. In an attempt to clarify the issue, the committee of the newly formed society published a statement of its aims and objects; the diffusion of information, the cultivation of taste, and the promotion of rational enjoyment by means of a library, a reading room, lectures, music, and classes for mutual instruction formed by the members among themselves.⁽⁴⁾ This is in complete accord with the accepted definition of a mechanics' institute.⁽⁵⁾ In particular, in an unexplored and

3. *ibid* July 3, 1852.

4. *ibid* July 24, 1852.

5. *vide* Chambers's Encyclopedia, Edinburgh, W. & R. Chambers Ltd.