

Men of all classes and pursuits, resident or non-resident, would gladly join in keeping up a room that should be always open to subscribers within reasonable hours; well furnished with books and periodicals; well lighted and warmed in the evenings; and from whose stores they might take home any books which they might wish to read at leisure. Get a good book club and reading room thus started, lectures and other means of improvement will follow. We are satisfied, however, that the work ought to be a public one, independent of all other societies, and adapting itself to the hours and seasons of all alike." (7)

If by this article the editor hoped to rouse the people of Christchurch to action, his success must have been gratifying, for less than one week later a notice inserted in the "Times" by Mr. C.J. Rae of the 1852 venture called a public meeting in the Oddfellows' Hall for Tuesday May 26, 1859, "to take into consideration the best means of establishing a Mechanics' Institute."⁽⁸⁾ In the same issue the editor's proposal was vigorously attacked by a correspondent who pointed out that one of the rooms being added to the Town Hall was intended for a library and that a large number of books and donations in addition to a sum of £120 had already been subscribed.⁽⁹⁾

Nevertheless, the correspondent wrote in vain, for a well attended meeting on the following day established the Mechanics' Institute on the motion of the Rev. C. Frazer who, in stressing the importance and desirability of such an institution, stated that, "in order to render it both popular and useful it is highly necessary that it should be conducted on the most liberal principles and the easiest terms consistent with its efficiency."⁽¹⁰⁾ Evidently the pioneers appreciated the desirability of placing library facilities

7. *ibid* May 21, 1859.

8. *ibid* May 25, 1859.

9. *ibid*

10. *ibid* June 1, 1859.