

within the reach of all. While stating that the desire of the promoters was to give the undertaking a purely public character, Mr. C.J. Rae disclaimed any intention of rivalling the scheme proposed in connection with the Town Hall. Fifty subscribers were then enrolled and, after appointing a committee and trustees, the meeting adjourned until June 9 when over seventy attended and the number of subscribers was increased to ninety-six. The society was then given definite form with a set of rules, honorary officials, and a librarian - Mr. F. Thompson.⁽¹¹⁾ Consequent on Mr. Rae's report that the promoters of the Town Hall were agreeable to the amalgamation of the two schemes it was decided to obtain temporary meeting rooms when the membership reached 100 and to proceed with the acquisition of a site and the erection of a building. Before two months had elapsed, temporary premises had been obtained in the Town Hall and on August 4, 1859 the Christchurch Mechanics' Institute was officially opened by Mr. John Hall. The Bishop of Christchurch - the principal speaker of the day - stated that the type of light reading which would be provided by the library to be formed was, he considered, instructive as well as amusing, and in many instances had been productive of much good, as for example the works of Sir Walter Scott. In the course of his speech he also suggested that good newspapers were of great value to such an institution as they supplied much beneficial information and instruction.⁽¹²⁾ Although the value of the library was stressed in the opening speeches, the Institute proceeded to

11. *ibid* June 11, 1859.

12. *ibid* August 10, 1859.