

established in its own building.

Whereas it might have been expected that such an institution might have taken a year to gain its feet, in the case of the Mechanics' Institute the early years were fraught with difficulties and discouragement. Such was the position, that at the second annual meeting, the chairman was forced to say that,

"Indeed, it appears evident to your committee that unless the inhabitants of Christchurch step cheerfully and immediately forward to support this institution by their subscriptions, it is quite impossible that it can maintain a position to carry out those objects of public benefit and utility for which it was established." (19)

However in spite of this adverse statement, other sections of the report showed a marked improvement as the number of books in the possession of the Institute had increased to two hundred and forty-six while the number of volumes circulated had increased to over eight hundred, and there was also a larger average attendance at the Reading Room. Furthermore, a satisfactory assurance had been received from the Government that a grant of money in lieu of a site had been placed on the estimates and only awaited the approval of the Provincial Council.

Unfortunately, at this interesting stage, when the Institute was struggling for existence, there is no record of the minutes of the third annual meeting held on June 25, 1862. However, the following minutes of the fourth annual meeting reveal that, at the 1862 meeting, the committee had announced the purchase of a site consisting of half an acre of land (sections No. 405 and 406) on the east side of the River Avon, fronting on Hereford Street and

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19. *ibid* July 3, 1861.