

Government for further financial assistance. Although in debt the members must surely have been gratified by the report of this special meeting in the "Times" which stated that,

"The room in which the meeting was held is 40 feet long, 18 feet broad and about 23 feet high. The arrangements for ventilation are excellent; and when finished and fitted up, the Christchurch Mechanics' Institute will possess the finest public reading room, without exception in New Zealand." (21)

On October 1, 1863 this building was taken over from the contractors - together with a total debt of £1485 (including the cost of the site.)

Within ten months the canvass had resulted in a large increase in subscriptions and donations, had increased shares from 180 to 200, and had augmented the membership to 435. (22) Furthermore, and possibly most important of all, the Provincial Council, evidently appreciating the educational value of the institution, had on September 24, 1863 made a grant of £250 towards the building fund. (23) The library now consisted of 1,500 volumes and a catalogue was in preparation. Although by this time the greatest emphasis appeared to be on the library and reading room, the Institute was still fulfilling its other obligations with a marked degree of success. During the year well attended lectures were delivered on such subjects as arts of design, acclimatization, clairvoyance, and animal physiology. In spite of the marked improvement in all branches of its work the Institute was now heavily in debt and in an enlightening speech the chairman issued

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21. *ibid* September 9, 1863.

22. Minute Book of Mechanics' Institute at Canterbury Public Library. June 30, 1864.

23. *vide supra*. p 8, n 17.