

At a quarterly meeting held on January 8, 1868 an important change was made in the nomenclature of the Institute. Because only a very small percentage of the members were mechanics it was decided to adopt the title "Literary Institute" and various alterations were made to the laws to suit this change. (28)

With a view to maintaining interest and increasing the funds of the Institute, debating and chess clubs were organised in 1869. (29) However the annual meeting in 1870 (30) did not show any reasons for enthusiasm over the amount of interest shown by the people of Christchurch, as the membership had dropped to 140. As the Institute had no extraneous revenue and was entirely self-supporting, it is clear that its success and progress depended on the members themselves, and, if there was not a large increase in membership in the near future, the very existence of the institution would be jeopardised. With a view to extending the usefulness of the Institute, the Reading Room was opened free of charge to persons residing in the country and visitors to the city, so long as they signed the visitors' book.

In an attempt to interest more people a number of improvements were carried out during the following year. Chairs replaced forms in the Reading Room while the tables were covered with green baize. The entrance was much improved by the introduction of glass doors and a new writing table was installed. However the most important

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28. L.T. January 8, 1868.

29. Minutes of Mechanics Institute. July 1, 1869.

30. *ibid* July 7, 1870.