

and organised attention to the social problems in the large centres. In industrial cities the less educated Afrikaner comes in contact with strange ideas and an environment entirely foreign to his character, and in preserving those characteristics of sobriety, orderliness and perseverance which so strongly marked the lives of his pious forbears, the Church will perform a great national service. Though the Voortrekker Republic of Natalia was but short-lived, the Afrikaner took no inconsiderable share in blazing the trail of civilisation in Natal; and, as one of the speakers remarked, it is peculiarly appropriate that the ideal of a Church devoted to the interests of the Dutch people should at last have been realised. Religion was a vital factor in the lives of Retief and his generation, and in dedicating the Church to the memory of the pioneers the local Dutch community has paid a well-deserved tribute to a body of men and women whose achievements and ideals are worthy of remembrance. It is gratifying to know that their efforts have been seconded very generously and heartily by members of other denominations and races—even as Retief and his men were fraternally welcomed by the handful of hardy pioneers who had planted the seeds of European settlement on the shores of Durban Bay.

A suitable building was, of course, the main consideration, and within a comparatively short time the members of the new congregation had promised over £12,000, to be paid in four yearly instalments. Tenders were called for a church in Aliwal Street, and that of Messrs. Craig Bros., of Johannesburg, was accepted in the sum of £11,400, the architects being Messrs. Louw and Moerdyk, of Bloemfontein and Johannesburg. The building was designed to contain 830 seats; the woodwork throughout is of teak, including the benches, for which Messrs. G. A. Fichardt, Ltd., were the successful tenderers in the sum of £1,418.

Many Valuable Gifts.

The organ, which has not yet arrived, will cost a little over £1,100, and it is the gift of the lady members of the congregation, who, by means of bazaars and the like, already have some £1,200 in hand. The instrument has been ordered from Walcker and So., of Ludwigsburg, Germany, and it is expected that it will be installed by April next. The pulpit, costing £145, is the gift of the children of the congregation, and in this case also more than the required amount has been raised. The clock is the gift of the Administrator, Sir Cornelis Wessels. Many other valuable gifts have been made in connection with the church, apart from the monetary donations. These include the communion plate and linen, collection plates, baptismal fount, four dozen teak chairs and a table for the vestry, and so on. Thanks to these handsome donations and gifts, the church is being opened to-day practically free of debt, only some £2,000 being outstanding on the whole.

The wisdom of the division of the congregation would appear from the fact that the new congregation in Bloemfontein already numbers some 1,900 members, and the kerkraad is considering procuring assistance for the Rev. Mr. Louw.

Building operations, it may also be mentioned, commenced in December last, so that it has taken some eleven months to complete a building which is a credit to the congregation and a valuable asset to the town. The scribe and treasurer of the congregation is Mr. Karl van Rooyen, of the Land Bank.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1923.

THE FRIEND, BLOEMFONTEIN,

Bloemfontein North D.R. Church.

Handsome New Edifice Completed.

A photograph in this issue depicts the Bloemfontein North Dutch Reformed Church, which was completed this week, and which will be formally opened this (Saturday) afternoon. The building is situated at the corner of Aliwal and First Streets. It is a handsome structure of blue ironstone, quarried on the town commonage, and the tower in the foreground, which is a prominent new landmark in that area, is ninety feet in height.

Several years ago, owing to the size of the Bloemfontein Dutch Reformed congregation, it was deemed advisable to form a new congregation known as the Bloemfontein North Dutch Reformed congregation. The decision was taken in October, 1919, and in November, 1920, the Rev. A. F. Louw was appointed the first minister of the new congregation, the services being held in the Ramblers Hall.

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