

9-2-31.

DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH

OPENING CEREMONY ON SATURDAY

"MILESTONE IN HISTORY OF COMMUNITY"

The new Dutch Reformed Church in Jameson Avenue, Salisbury, was officially opened on Saturday afternoon in the presence of a large congregation. Among those present were His Excellency the Governor and Lady Rodwell (attended by Capt. B. V. Cherry, M.C.), and the Hon. W. M. Leggate, the Hon. P. D. L. Fynn and Mrs. Fynn, and the Hon. R. A. and Mrs. Fletcher. Representatives of the other religious denominations in Salisbury were also present.

The Rev. J. A. Pienaar welcomed His Excellency the Governor and Lady Rodwell and the Cabinet Ministers who were present, and thanked them for their attendance. He welcomed also all the English-speaking friends of the Dutch-speaking community who had attended in such large numbers.

In referring to the progress made by the Dutch Reformed Church in Salisbury Mr. Pienaar said he had arrived in Salisbury a little over five years ago, and had found the congregation without any funds. It was soon decided to erect a church hall, but it quickly became evident that a church hall would not serve the purpose, and it was decided to raise a fund to build a new church. With the co-operation of friends in Salisbury and the surrounding district £5,700 was raised in five years. This figure was augmented by a generous loan of £2,750 from the Church in the Orange Free State, and finally the present building was erected at a cost of £9,700. There was still, however, an outstanding debt of £4,000, but he had no doubt that this would be paid in a little over two years' time.

In conclusion he thanked the building committee for the excellent work they had done, and also the rest of the congregation for their faithful support.

Memorable Occasion

His Excellency the Governor said he welcomed this opportunity of addressing the Dutch Reformed congregation. To whatever denomination in the Colony the Governor belonged personally, he said, he occupied a relation wholly undenominational towards every religious section of the community. In attending this celebration he represented not only the Anglican Church, but all the churches, and on their behalf he congratulated all concerned in the conception and successful undertaking of such a task as the building of this fine church. The occasion would always be memorable to him, for in all the time he had been in Southern Rhodesia he had never seen so many people in church.

"We now have in this town," he continued, "what I believe to be the first example in the Colony of a church of the type which is a prominent and dignified feature of most of the towns in the Union, a building which well might be a source of pride, not only to those who worship within its walls, but to the citizens of Salisbury in general.

The Governor also referred to the excellent relations that existed between the Dutch Reformed Church and other religious sections of the community.

"A Milestone in Their History"

"To the Dutch community in this Colony," he said, "this church will be a milestone in their history. For their ministers and missionaries it will be an encouragement in the fine work they are doing under God's guidance to further the spiritual welfare of the population, both European and native."

Mr. G. Moerdyk, the architect, also referred to the prominence of the Dutch Reformed Church among the buildings of every town in the Union. "We of the Dutch Church in South Africa," he said, "are perhaps even more bound up in our Church than most other peoples, for it is our Church which has been our spiritual guide and has saved the national spirit of our people. The usefulness of the Dutch citizen is measured by his loyalty to his traditions and to his Church, for, although it is a mistake to teach nationalism, it has never been found wise to denationalise a people." He referred to the progress the Dutch Church had made in South Africa, and to the usefulness of the work it was doing.

Dr. P. J. Pienaar, a representative of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Orange Free State, then preached a sermon in Dutch, taking as his text "The Church, which is My body."

Dedication of Lights

In the evening there was a special service at which the lights of the church were dedicated. During the singing of the first hymn, Mrs. Hartel, the oldest member of the congregation—she is 86—walked to the main switch on the arm of the Rev. Mr. Pienaar, and turned on the lights. Some time ago she expressed the desire to be allowed to do so, and her wish was readily given effect to. The Rev. Dr. de Villiers, of Bulawayo, officiated at the dedication service.