

BANDED TOGETHER.

EARLY SETTLERS' MEETING.

PILGRIMS' ASSOCIATION BIRTH.

In the hall in which the Government of the Canterbury Province was carried on in years now far past, the first annual meeting of the newly-formed Canterbury Pilgrims' Association was held last evening. The Provincial Chambers, where much provincial history was made, was decorated with greenery for the occasion, the chamber itself and the entrance hall being a delight to the eye with its gorgeous interior set off with palms, plants, and flowers.

The body of the chamber was well filled, many obviously being early pioneers of the province. The Mayor, Mr J. A. Flesher, presided over the meeting, with him on the dais being Mr R. C. Bishop and the Rev. F. G. Brittan.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

The chairman expressed the great pleasure it gave him to preside at a meeting of an association which was about to begin remaking history. It was very fitting, the Mayor added, that on his right should be Mr R. C. Bishop, who came out on one of the First Four Ships, and on his left the Rev. F. G. Brittan. (Applause.) The speaker went on to refer to the preliminary work done by the committee, which had been at work preparing for the establishment of the Canterbury Pilgrims' Association. Last year a committee had been set up to arrange the anniversary celebrations, and it had been asked to go further and arrange for the formation of a Pilgrims' Association. Meetings had recently been held, and rules approved, continued Mr Flesher, and the rules had been approved by a general meeting at which there was a good attendance. The committee was asked to continue in existence until the present meeting. It had continued its work and prepared for the celebrations of Anniversary Day, the first part of which would take place on the Saturday before Sunday, December 16. A function would be held in the Botanic Gardens on the Saturday and the second part of the celebrations would be held on the Sunday.

MEMBERSHIP CLASSES.

Up to the present the association had 351 members, subscriptions amounting to £127, and that result had been achieved without any special effort being made to enrol members. The committee had arranged for three classes of members. One class would consist of pioneers who arrived in New Zealand before January 1, 1871, their children or their descendants, persons who became the husband or wife of such. Those would be ordinary members. Another class would be of those who arrived before January 1, 1854, their children or descendants, and those would be foundation members—the most honourable phase possible. The third class would be associate members, who would be people who would undertake to actively promote the objects of the association.

OBJECTS OF ASSOCIATION.

The objects of the association, continued Mr Flesher, were to promote a spirit of brotherhood and friendship among the pioneers and their descendants; to inspire and perpetuate the spirit of veneration for the pioneers in the later generations and to foster their spirit. Another was to collect the early history and perhaps later to purchase a hall in which to meet.

A Voice: Why not have this one?

The Mayor: Well that would be very fine and perhaps we might be able to get on the right side of the authorities.

Continuing, he said other objects would be to collect and preserve books, articles, and papers illustrative of the experiences of the pioneers; to collect as many records and anecdotes of early settlers as possible with a view to making records of their lives, and finally to engender a knowledge of the history of the province.

COMING CELEBRATIONS.

Referring to the coming celebrations, Mr Flesher pointed out that December 16 fell on a Sunday this year and expressed the opinion that that was very fitting in view of the great part that the Anglican Church had played in the province. It had been thought fitting that when the Anniversary Day fell on a week day, the celebrations should be held on the Saturday of the week. On this occasion the Gardens had been placed at the disposal of the association for a function for which it was proposed to make an admission fee for the general public. Members would be admitted free and it was proposed to entertain them at afternoon tea. Then a march of school children representing all primary and secondary schools

would take place, the guests of honour being placed in a convenient position. The children would thus be able to pay honour to the pioneers and it was right to instil in their minds a veneration of the pioneers to whom they owed so much. The speaker hoped that the function would be the forerunner of many a similar gathering and that it would be kept up every year. Regarding the Sunday functions there would be a special service at the Anglican Cathedral in the morning to which members of all local bodies had been invited and all had accepted. His Grace Archbishop Julius would be the preacher, though he had wished some one of the pioneers to take the service, but the speaker's opinion was that it was right that the head of the Church should be in the position, for the service would be quite as memorable as that of the Canterbury College jubilee. In the afternoon a service would be held for young people at the Cathedral and there would also be an open-air service at the hospital grounds and collections would be made at each for toys and Christmas gifts for the children in orphanages, hospitals and other institutions.

What was wanted, continued the Mayor, was increased membership. A good start had been made with 350, but there was no reason why it should not be raised to 2000 or 3000. The fact that there were members in places as far away as Gore, Palmerston North and the West Coast showed that the objects of the association were appealing to many who still had regard for their native place or the place in which they had spent their early days.

A badge had been designed and the speaker hoped that members would always wear them as he also hoped that future meetings would be held in the Provincial Council Chambers. The building would remind some of days gone by and would impress on the younger members the noble traditions of the past and would help in building up a finer record of Canterbury's early days.

SUGGESTION NEGATIVED.

Mr M. J. Gresson, speaking of the rules, suggested that instead of the year 1871 being decided upon it should be 1861. He did not think either that

the constitution should provide for associate members. It should be regarded as a great honour to belong to the association and so the rule should not be widened to permit every one to join. As it was the membership would grow bigger as the descendants would be increasing in number, and so membership should be restricted to pioneers and their descendants.

The next speaker agreed that the door was being opened too wide and that membership should be restricted to pioneers and their descendants.

Mr Theo. Barker raised the point that some of the committee might come under the strictures proposed.

Mr J. O. Jameson suggested a compromise making eligibility for ordinary membership open to those who arrived earlier than January 1, 1865.

Mr Flesher pointed out that an associate member would practically be an honorary member, but he would have to undertake to work for the advancement of the association.

A speaker who said he came out in 1874 said Mr Gresson's proposal was not a liberal one. He had already joined. Another speaker who came out in 1862 said he had also enrolled, but if Mr Gresson's proposal were adopted he, too, would be ineligible.

Mr Gresson said that members who had joined on the 1871 understanding should continue as members.

The Mayor pointed out that in other centres the year was brought up one each year.

No action was taken.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

The following officers were elected:—President, the Mayor (Mr J. A. Flesher); vice-presidents, Mr John Anderson, the Rev. F. G. Brittan, Dean Harper, Mrs John Deans, Messrs Theo. Barker, R. C. Bishop, M. J. Gresson, A. D. Dobson, G. Jameson, T. Phillips, N. Macfarlane, L. Bowen and C. P. Cox; committee, Drs J. Hight, C. Ghilton, Professor J. Shelley, Messrs H. L. Bowker, E. R. Webb, G. Hanmer, W. Johnson, R. B. Owen, J. R. Cunningham, C. Hastings Bridge, W. S. Lovell-Smith, C. Littlecot and L. B. Hart. The number will be made up to 18, further nominations being in the hands of the committee.

The first meeting of the new committee will be held in the City Council library at 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday next.