

NEW ANGLICAN CHURCH AT OKATO AND TATARAIMAKA.

LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONES.

OKATO and Tataraimaka are two progressive districts in Taranaki. The former is about eighteen miles south of New Plymouth, the township being on the Stoney river, and in the sixties, when the natives were in a state of rebellion, it was considered one of the frontier settlements. Tataraimaka is about ten miles to the north of Okato, and was originally purchased from the natives in 1846. In the old times there was a large pa on the land capable of holding a considerable number of natives, and was called Pukeporoporo. The natives then had the place in a state of cultivation, but when it was sold the pa had become dilapidated, and the land overgrown with weeds and native shrubbery. Previous to the rising of the Southern natives in rebellion in 1861, the settlers on the Tataraimaka block had decided to erect a place of worship in a central situation, and arrangements had gone so far that the timber had been cut and placed on the ground. The outbreak of hostilities, however, put a stop to further progress, and the timber was purchased by the Government for £100, and was utilised in the erection of a block-house. The money received was invested, and formed the nucleus of the fund now being raised for the erection of the church.

For some time past the settlers both at Okato and Tataraimaka have been most energetic in raising funds and in securing sites for churches in their districts, and everything being completed to start the erection of the buildings, the Ven. Archdeacon Govett was asked to lay the foundation stones. The day fixed on for the ceremony was Thursday, February 11th, but the weather being very wet and tempestuous, it was postponed till the next day. Accordingly on Friday, the weather having cleared up, a party in vehicles, left New Plymouth, consisting of Ven. Archdeacon Govett, Rev. F. W. Walker, Rev. F. G. Evans, Rev. C. W. Robinson, Mr W. H. Skinner, Mr S. W. Shaw, the members of St. Mary's choir (under Mr Sidney Cooper), and others. As the sun rose in the heavens the atmosphere became pleasantly refreshing, so the drive out was most enjoyable to the party taking part in the ceremony.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF TATARAIMAKA CHURCH.

The party from New Plymouth reached Tataraimaka at about noon, and were met by the Rev. H. Mason and a large party of the settlers, their wives and families. Preparation was at once made for the ceremony, and a procession was formed headed by Mr W. Cutfield, Mr Wareham, and Mr W. H. Skinner, who were followed by Ven. Archdeacon Govett, the assisting ministers—Rev. F. W. Walker, Rev. F. G. Evans, Rev. H. Mason, and Rev. C. W. Robinson—all in their robes, and the choir of St. Mary's Church in their surplices. The procession went

round the site of the proposed church, which was presented for the purpose by Mr F. A. Carrington, of New Plymouth, and on arriving at the corner site the choir sang a hymn. The Rev. C. W. Robinson then read some prayers and the choir chanted the 'Te Deum.' Other appropriate prayers were read, and the religious service was concluded by the Ven. Archdeacon Govett giving a general thanksgiving.

Mr W. Cutfield, the minister's warden, then handed to the Archdeacon a mallet on which was a silver plate, suitably inscribed, and the venerable gentleman proceeded to lay the stone by tapping it and declaring it 'to be well and truly laid,' at the same time naming the building to be erected St. Peter's Church. Archdeacon Govett then touched upon the origin of laying foundation stones, and mentioned the rite of Jacob the Patriarch, who set up a stone as a pillar in the wilderness after seeing the vision in his sleep. In conclusion he congratulated the settlers on possessing a church in the near future dedicated solely to the worship of God, and referred to the fact that they now had a minister of the gospel dwelling in their midst. Another hymn was then sung by the choir, when the benediction having been given, the proceedings were brought to a close.

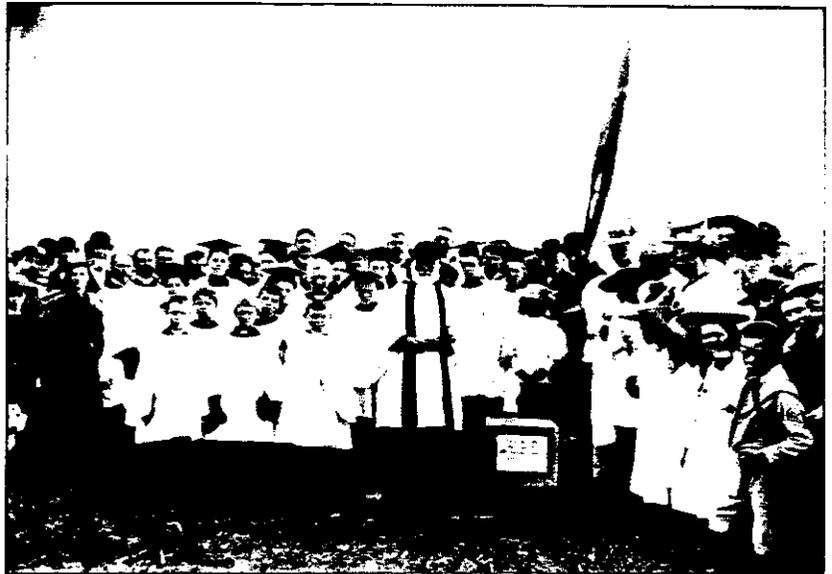
The officers of St. Peter's Tataraimaka, are:—Vestry, Messrs W. Cutfield, G. W. Wareham, W. Honeyfield, W. Cave, L. Luckin; minister's warden, Mr W. Cutfield; people's warden, Mr G. W. Wareham; secretary, Mr W. L. P. Chambers.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF OKATO CHURCH.

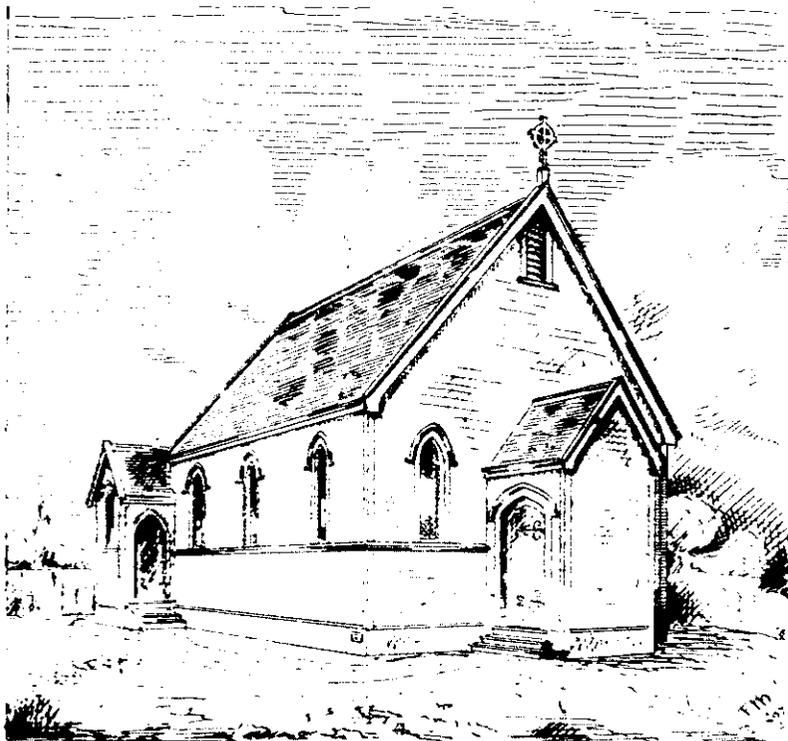
In preparation for the event, Okato had put on its holiday attire, and all the available bunting was made use of for the occasion. The party from New Plymouth were accompanied from Tataraimaka by a number of the settlers, and proceeded to the farm of Mr W. Lambie, near the Kaihihi River, where the ladies of the district had prepared in a glade by the river bank a substantial repast. The ladies were unremitting in their attention to the visitors, who did justice to the good things provided. Those who took part were Mesdames Bell, Cutfield, Corbett, Elwin, Eustace, Fox, A. Gray, McCullum, Sale, and Wareham, who were assisted by Misses Bell (two), Bowers, Crozier, Greenway, Humphreys, Pearce, Sole, Shaw, Thomson, and Woolridge.

The site of the new church is in Carthew-street, just off the main road, and was given by Mr A. Gray, of Okato. The settlers have subscribed liberally towards the building, which has been supplemented by a loan of £100 from St. Mary's Vestry for ten years without interest, and £25 from the English Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.

The visitors having refreshed themselves, a start was



LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, OKATO.



NEW ANGLICAN CHURCH (ST. PAUL'S), OKATO, TARANAKI.

made for the township, and as the party arrived at the site of the new church there was to be seen placed on a hoarding near the stone, painted on canvas, the following text, 'Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious—1st Peter, ch. 2, v. 6.' The work was done by Mr D. F. Greenway. The ceremony gone through at Tataraimaka was again repeated at Okato, but on this occasion Messrs W. J. Gray and A. Bell were the assisting wardens. After the religious service was concluded the Archdeacon proceeded to lay the stone, and named the church St. Paul's. He then addressed a few remarks to those present. He said the work of laying two foundation stones in one day was an event which very seldom fell to any but a bishop in a large diocese, and it pleased him to think that the settlers had been moved to erect two churches in that part of the district. From what he knew of the clergymen in the diocese, he felt certain they would labour hard to carry on the good work, and he predicted a happy career for both churches.

A marble plate was inlaid in the foundation stone, on which was inscribed, 'This stone was laid by Ven. Archdeacon Govett, February 11th, 1897,' and in a cavity cut in the stone, besides the current coins of the realm and local newspapers, were placed the names of the officers of St. Paul's Church, who are as follows:—Curate-in-charge, Rev. H. Mason; vestry, Messrs C. Sole, A. Gray, A. Bell, and J. McCullum; minister's warden, Mr A. Bell; people's warden, Mr A. Gray; building committee, W. N. Syme, A. Bell, and A. Gray; secretary and treasurer, Mr A. Bell.

After the ceremony Mr A. Bell, the minister's warden, read an address to the Archdeacon, in which the settlers thanked him for the assistance rendered that day, and wishing that gentleman *bon voyage* on his contemplated trip to the Old Country. Archdeacon Govett, in reply, thanked them, and said with God's will he hoped to return to Taranaki and lay his bones in the land of his adoption.

After the ceremony those assembled returned to the spot near the Kaihihi river, where tea had been provided, and the local Maori brass band, under the leadership of Mr Swayland, played several selections. In the evening a concert was held in the schoolroom, which was well attended. The offerings collected at each place were large and satisfactory.

We are indebted to Mr E. H. Clark, schoolmaster at Okato, for the photograph of the ceremony of laying the foundation stone, and to Mr F. Messinger, architect, New Plymouth, for a sketch of the building to be erected.