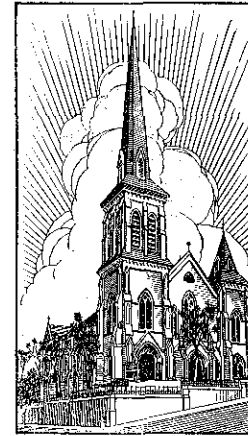




St. John's Through 100 Years

*A brief account of the first hundred
years of St. John's Presbyterian
Church, Willis Street, Wellington,
New Zealand*

1853 — 1953

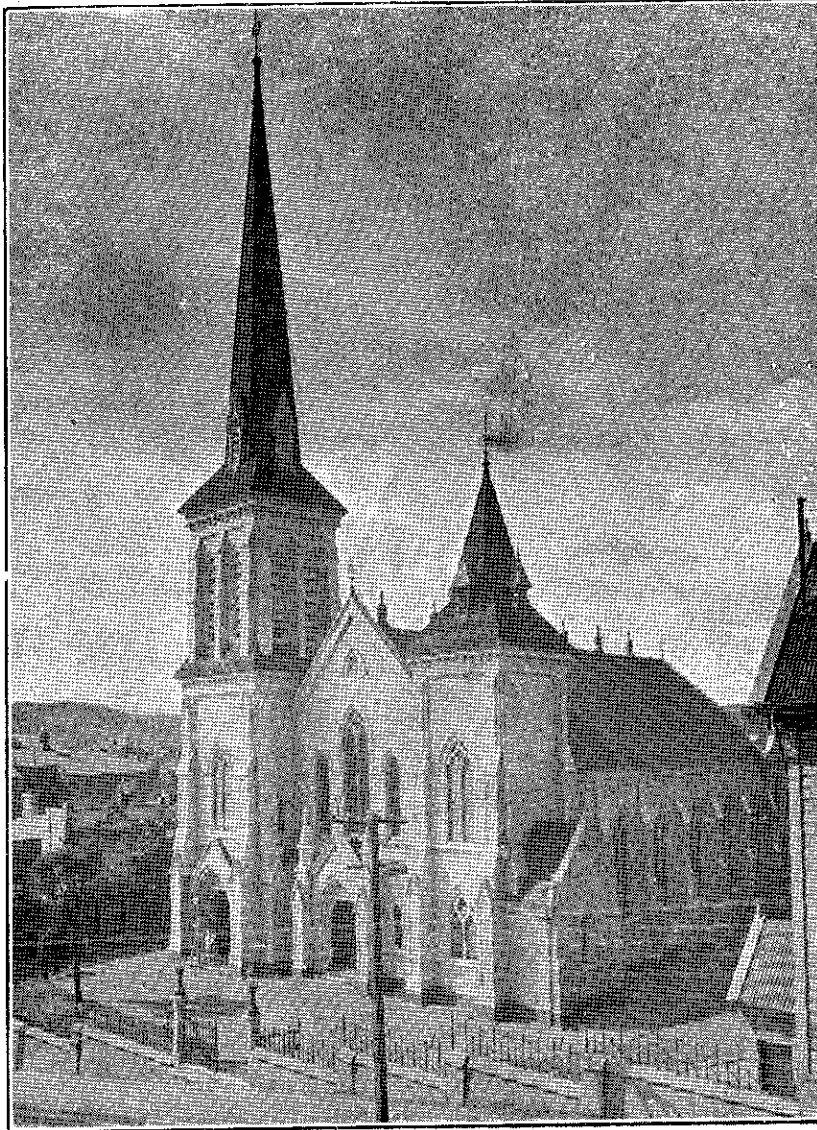


St. John's Through 100 Years

A brief account of the first hundred years of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Willis Street, Wellington, New Zealand, published on the occasion of its Centennial in November, 1953.

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FOREWORD

THIS BOOKLET IS NOT A HISTORY. I DOUBT IF ST. JOHN'S history could be written. The fire of 1884 took its toll of much valuable material concerning our beginnings. In the years since many threads have been woven into the story, and many lives, some great in fame, many more only names on Communion Rolls, have been used by God to keep alight the fire on the altar. Let this be their lasting monument. They all belong to that great company, "our fellow-labourers whose names are in the Book of Life".

The Session would place this booklet among the records as an Essay in History—an attempt to trace the course our fathers steered, and to point to some of the landmarks that helped to chart their toiling at the oars. Although, in places, the records may do less than justice to some of our pioneers, nevertheless their works, I believe, will shine out in the following pages. Here is the evidence of God's mighty Hand on this Congregation. Here we experience the sense of His Presence and enabling Grace to men and women who through times often difficult, exposed to the changing fortunes of a Dominion still in-the-making, found strength enough to match their visions, and knew the exhilaration of travelling the hard road with Christ when they could have chosen the smooth one for themselves.

For me one fact glows like a flame in this narrative. St. John's most surely travelled in the Joy of the Lord in days when her people moved out to meet the call of new commitments and the sacrifices that these entailed. The Word that made our Church a beacon and a blessing is this Word: "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall find it." To feel the pulse of that Life in them is both inspiration and summons. May the Presence Who supported them make us equal to His task for us today. May the Grace which sent them to win His Kingdom in other lives be our abundant provision, that we too may come home bringing our sheaves with us.

WILLIAM P. TEMPLE

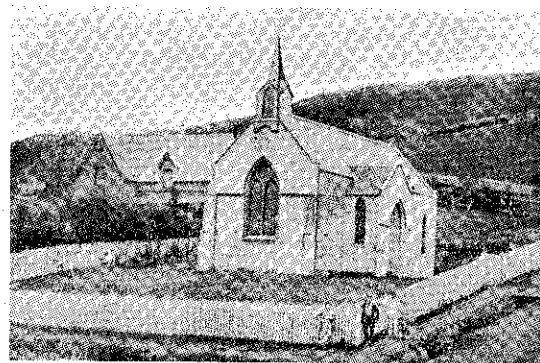
ST. JOHN'S THROUGH 100 YEARS

ORIGIN AND ESTABLISHMENT

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION TO BE ESTABLISHED in Wellington, which later became St. Andrew's, had been formed as an offshoot of the Church of Scotland in 1840. A measure of division developed in this congregation in 1851. The arrival in Otago in 1848 of members of the Free Church of Scotland (which had disrupted from the Church of Scotland in 1843) and the inevitable movement of some of these people northward to Wellington in the next few years contributed to the division of Presbyterians in Wellington and no doubt influenced one section of them to look to the Free Church of Scotland for a solution of their disharmonies. They decided to form a second congregation to be within the Free Church.

On November 15, 1851, therefore, a group of 69 people in Wellington sent off a petition to the Free Church of Scotland to send them a regularly ordained Minister of that Church and on November 3, 1853, the Rev. John Moir landed in Wellington. He conducted his first services on November 6 and was formally inducted into his office as Minister of the Free Church of Wellington on November 17. This last date, therefore, marks the formal establishment of the congregation later known as the Willis Street Presbyterian Church and later still as St. John's.

The new congregation had secured the use of the Athenaeum on Lambton Quay (then known as the Beach) and here they held that first service on November 6, 1853, and the regular services for the next three years. In the early months of 1854, a Kirk Session was formed consisting of four elders—Messrs. James Mitchell, Michael Quin, James Blyth and Adam McDonald. Two deacons were also appointed—Messrs. William Lyon and James Wallace. With the setting up of a Session the congregation had achieved the final step in its formation. On the first Sunday in June, 1854, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed to the new congregation for the first time. Sixty-nine people had signed the originating petition and the membership is recorded



The First Church, 1856

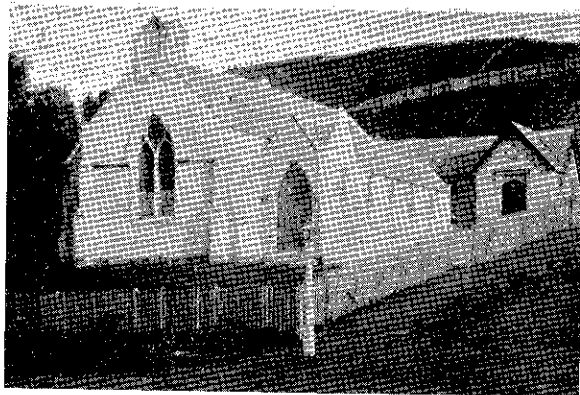
as being 68 in the year or two following Mr. Moir's induction. In 1856 a Church was erected and at the first Communion service in the new building in October, 1856, forty-two persons took Communion.

The congregation, once it moved into its own building, became known as the Willis Street Presbyterian Church. During 1872 the name was changed to St. John's Presbyterian Church, Willis Street, but no record now exists of the circumstances giving rise to this change of name. The roll then stood at 149.

In its first years the congregation grew slowly. As the growth of the city itself accelerated, however, so did the growth of the congregation. In 1878 the Communion Roll stood at 250, which was an increase of 30 on the roll of the preceding year, but before taking up the story of this growth in numbers and activities it will be appropriate to record something of the Church buildings themselves.

THE BUILDINGS

IN 1855 PLANS WERE PREPARED FOR A CHURCH BUILDING WHICH, together with a site, was to cost £1,000. The site was purchased on the corner of Willis Street and Dixon Street where the present Church stands, although the area purchased was less than the area subsequently held on this site. In 1855 the sum of £1,000 meant much more than it does today and was indeed a considerable target for a congregation of sixty to seventy people, but our early Presbyterian congregations had high courage



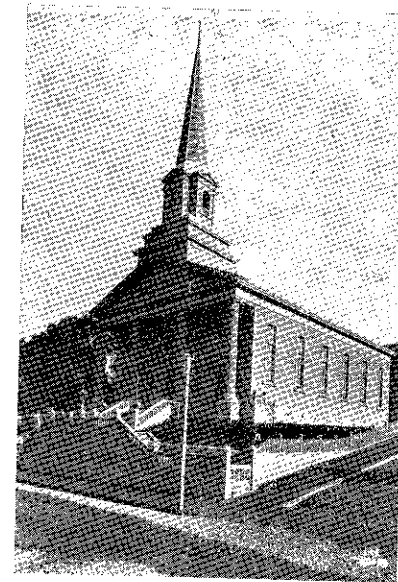
The First Church, with additions, 1866

and a grand capacity for giving both of themselves and of their money. The Church, which would accommodate 200 worshippers (three times the need of the existing congregation), was built in 1856 and the Rev. John Moir preached at the opening service on August 31, 1856. It was a wooden building of neat conventional design with a belfry surmounted by a short steeple. The newspaper of the day described it as "an ornament to the city".

In 1858 the sum of £275 was raised for an addition to the Church building mainly to provide for the growing Sabbath School, but the uncertainties of the Maori Wars and other difficulties delayed the construction until 1866 when an annex was added to the side of the Church. By this time both Sunday School and congregation were growing rapidly and in 1871 a further addition was made.

Even this second addition could not meet the growing requirements of the congregation and by 1874 still more accommodation was necessary. The Church building itself was not twenty years old, but the additions had already detracted from it architecturally and further additions would raise problems of inconvenience as well as further spoiling the appearance of the buildings. In 1874 the congregation of no more than 170 people resolved to pull down the existing buildings and erect a new Church at a cost of some £4,000. Again they planned a Church for a congregation of upwards of three times its existing size,

the new Church being designed to seat 600 people. Of the money required, £2,400 was subscribed immediately (an average of over £12 per church member at a time when £12 was a month's wages for a working man). On June 29, 1875, the foundation stone of the new church was laid by the Marquis of Normanby, then Governor of the Colony, and the church was opened on December 12 in the same year. All agreed that it was a building for St. John's to be proud of. At the same time a new Sunday School was also built beside the Church.



The Second Church, 1875

St. John's had built two churches within twenty years, but it was destined to build three within thirty years. At about 7 a.m. on Friday, May 9, 1884, the new church and adjoining Sunday School hall, both not yet ten years old, were burnt to the ground. It was a devastating blow, but this congregation had no doubts, no backward looks. While the embers were still hot, they began to plan for a new and still larger church and a new and still larger Sunday School hall. The new church, planned to cost £6,800, would require more land and so they bought the adjoining property for £1,500. The house then on it was moved to where it still stands as the Church Officer's house.

In addition to the insurance on the destroyed buildings the congregation had to raise about £5,000. In raising this sum the Church Treasurer, Mr. James Smith (founder of James Smith's Ltd.), proved a tower of strength in rallying the congregation to the effort required. By the time the foundation stone was laid by the Chief Justice, Sir James Prendergast, on May 15, 1885, Mr. James Smith could announce that he had £3,140 in hand or promised. The architect of the new church was Mr.

Thomas Turnbull and the builder was Mr. James Wilson. At the same time the new Sunday School hall (the present Dixon Street Hall) was built.

The new church, with seating for 800, was opened on December 6, 1885. In that year the members of St. John's in full Communion numbered only 360. The records say: "That so small a body of men and women faced and accomplished tasks of such magnitude as the erection of two large churches with halls and Sunday School building in nine years is a circumstance as surprising as it is gratifying." The records appear to have stated it mildly. What courage, what a heart this congregation had!

In 1901 gaslight was installed in the Church and Sunday School and it is interesting to learn that, with the choice of electricity or gas, they chose the latter. Electric lighting and heating was not installed until 1927. In 1902, when the Sunday School buildings were extended, a Social Parlour was provided in the basement below the hall and was referred to as "commodious, handsomely furnished, well lit and warmed. . . ."

Until 1929 the congregation derived a certain amount of revenue from letting the hall and other rooms in the Sunday School building. In that year, however, the unimproved value of the Church property was raised from £1,825 to £4,300, and the consequential increase in rates on the premises, if let, made it inexpedient to continue the practice.

FEATURES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

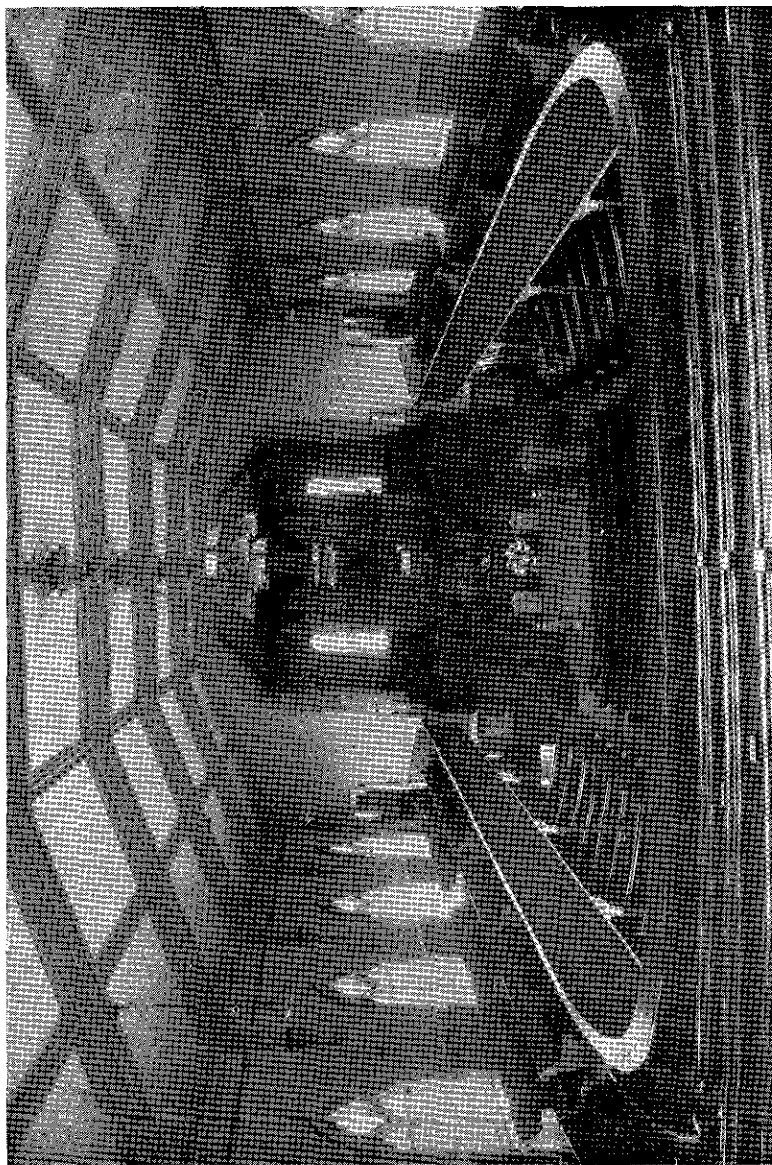
THE CHURCH AS IT STANDS TODAY HAS MUCH OF SPECIAL interest in it—things which have a history behind them, which mark great events and great people.

First for mention should, of course, be the organ. When the new Church was built in 1885 it had room for the installation of an organ in the choir gallery and Mr. James Smith was determined to see an organ, and a fine one, installed. He made it his personal mission to raise the money and to secure a worthy instrument, and in 1886 a particularly fine instrument was secured from Lewis and Co., London, at a cost of £1,600. Mr. James Smith had gone far afield in his efforts to raise this money and by

the time the organ was installed he had a large part of it in hand and a number of members of the congregation lent the balance free of interest until the whole amount was subscribed. The installing of this organ in St. John's was in fact a community as much as a congregational donation. The total cost, including installation, was £1,859, and of this amount £807 came from outside the congregation (including some £200 in donations from London). £537 was raised by concerts and recitals and the balance was contributed directly by members of the congregation. But behind the gifts stands the foresight, the enthusiasm and the energy of one man. The organ, which has won very high praise from overseas visitors to New Zealand, is, in effect if not in fact, the memorial to Mr. James Smith. His son, Mr. A. P. Smith, also an office-bearer of St. John's for many years, continued to have a very special interest in "his father's organ" and on his death in 1948 left the sum of £1,000 for its renovation. In 1910 the family of Mr. James Smith presented the Church with the three Pulpit chairs "in memory of their father who served the Church in many offices and for many years and in whose heart its welfare ever held a foremost place."

When the War Memorial for the 1914-1918 war was unveiled in 1920—the two brass tablets, one on either side of the pulpit, bearing the names of those who served and those who made the supreme sacrifice—a member of the congregation (anonymously at the time) gave the two beautiful stained glass windows, one at each side of the organ, as part of the memorial. It may now be recorded that the gift came from the Hon. J. G. W. Aitken.

The other stained glass window in the Church, the "Good Samaritan" window in the north wall above the gallery, is a most beautiful piece of work. It was dedicated on July 15, 1923, in memory of the Hon. J. G. W. Aitken, the grand old man of St. John's first century, who died in August, 1921. The following brief tribute to him is taken from the 1922 Report of the Session: "Mr. Aitken's labours were abundant; in Parliament, in the municipality, in the sphere of education, and in countless philanthropic enterprises and agencies he strove incessantly to serve his day and generation. His private charities were as numerous as his public service. . . . But Mr. Aitken's devotion was above all to the Church and in her work he found his chief joy. To his own congregation and to the Church in general he



Church Interior

was indeed a tower of strength. In the Church Property Trustees and in Assembly Committees too numerous to name, his unfailing sagacity and singleness of purpose was a priceless asset to the work." He had been ordained an elder in St. John's thirty-seven years earlier in 1884. In 1918 he was called to be Moderator of the General Assembly, the first layman Moderator in the history of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.

The Communion Table and centre Chair commemorate another great man. The table, designed by Mr. W. Gray Young and made by Mr. Alex. Martin, was dedicated in 1933 in memory of Mr. M. D. Menelaus, who had passed away in 1931. A brass tablet on the west wall of the Church also commemorates him. He was a member of St. John's for 44 years, an elder for 36 years and Session Clerk for 29 years. Of him the 1931 Report records: "Active in every work of the Church, he yet always kept himself in the background. Never self-seeking, he was ever forward when work was to be done; whatever he undertook to do was done promptly, faithfully and well."

Of the two Communion Table chairs on either side of the Minister's chair, one is in memory of Alexander Hopkirk, elder from 1876 to 1907, and was presented by his son, William Hopkirk, and the other is in memory of William Allan, elder from 1884 to 1921, and was presented by his family.

The lectern at the side of the Communion Table stands in memory of yet another great man, Mr. William Hopkirk, who gave sixty-one years of service in the Sunday School and who will be mentioned again when we come to tell the story of the Sunday School. He became a manager in 1876 and an elder in 1888, holding the latter office for 48 years. He was a member of the Board of Queen Margaret and Scots Colleges and a well-known figure in Presbytery and Assembly. His place in the annals of St. John's is also commemorated in a brass tablet on the west wall of the Church and by the Bible on the lectern which was given by Mrs. Mary Hopkirk in 1937.

The beautiful brass lectern which stands in the centre of the Communion Table during Communion services was given by the Rev. and Mrs. Gladstone Hughes in memory of their son, Sub-Lieutenant H. W. Hughes, R.N.Z.N.V.R., who had made the supreme sacrifice in the 1939-45 war.

There are two other tablets on the west wall of the Church.

One of these is in memory of Sir George Troup, whose name occurs so frequently in the last half of St. John's first century. His work for the Bible Class is mentioned elsewhere. He joined St. John's in 1888, was ordained as an elder in 1895 and retained that office for 46 years until his death in 1941. He did great work not only for the Bible Classes and the Bible Class Movement, but also in developing the Wellington Boys' Institute and in many other fields in both Church and civic affairs. He was Mayor of Wellington from 1927 to 1931.

The other tablet on the west wall is in memory of Mr. A. P. Smith, son of Mr. James Smith. Mr. A. P. Smith was associated with St. John's all his life, having been baptised in the Church in 1873. He was an elder from 1913 until his death in 1948, and a Session minute says of him: "He inherited from his father a spirit of intense loyalty to the Church and an eagerness to support all its activities. The Board of Managers never called on him in vain and he never failed to respond readily and generously to every appeal for support; he was particularly interested in the praise service of the Church, and the organ which his father had been instrumental in installing."

A brass tablet in the north wall of the Church commemorates Mr. John Kirkcaldie (who was a member of the Board of Management for 48 years) and members of his family.

To mark its Jubilee celebrations the Young Men's Bible Class presented the Church with the embroidered pulpit fall which was placed on the pulpit on May 26, 1940. Bookmarkers for the pulpit Bible and Hymn Book were presented by the ladies of the congregation in 1928, and in 1938 the Women's Association presented the Church with a cloth of pure Irish linen of proper ecclesiastical design for the Communion Table.

The present pulpit Bible was given to St. John's by Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Kersley as a thank-offering on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1950. Mr. Kersley served St. John's long and faithfully as manager and elder and in its youth work.

There are other articles about the Church which while not of the same commemorative interest, nevertheless have associations which are well worth recording. In 1936 Mrs. Helen Hall presented the Church with the mallet and the silver and ivory

trowel presented to Sir James Prendergast for the laying of the foundation stone in 1885.

In 1886 Mr. R. Pringle, of London, an uncle of Mr. A. P. Smith, gave the Church a silver Communion service which is still in use.

The offering plates in the Church were the gift of Mr. Alex Martin, who is now the second most senior elder (Mr. Ad. Howitt, ordained in 1913, being senior elder). Mr. Martin was leader of the Young Men's Class from 1916 to 1921, was ordained an elder in 1919, and was Session Clerk from 1945 to 1949. The clock at the front of the gallery was the gift of Mr. Dawson in 1889, when he left for Melbourne after fourteen years' membership of St. John's.

Before we leave the subject of Church furnishings, it is of interest to record that individual Communion glasses were introduced in 1904, and a battery hearing aid in 1933. This was later replaced by an electric amplifier as more deaf folk came to appreciate the benefit of using the earphones. In 1950 the old bell was retired in favour of the more modern chimes amplifier. Both the hearing aid amplifier and the chimes amplifier were gifts to the Church.

THE CONGREGATION

MUCH OF THE STORY OF ST. JOHN'S THROUGH ITS FIRST CENTURY is to be found in the annals of the various organisations which are dealt with separately in other parts of this narrative. The story will, therefore, not be complete until the history of each organisation in turn has been presented; but there is first of all something to be told of the congregation as a whole — its growth, some of the points of interest which can well be brought forward from the past, and some of the achievements of a Church which has marched with high courage through the first hundred years.

We have already spoken of the early congregation and its growth to a Communion Roll of 250 in 1878. The roll increased to 360 in 1885 and to 422 in 1888. This growth continued fairly steadily and in 1903 when the Rev. James Paterson retired the roll had reached 638.

Some interest attaches to roll numbers, although it must always be remembered that these have been influenced from time

to time by the establishment of suburban churches; the spread of the industrial area, and the difficulties left by times of war.

For the first fifteen years of Dr. Gibb's ministry the upward movement continued. In 1913 the number of new members joining the Church during the year reached the record of 163, but large-scale comings and goings were a feature of the congregation, and even this large accession of new members increased the roll numbers by only 71. In 1918 the Communion Roll reached 887, the highest it has ever been, but this figure must be treated with some reserve, as it included some 252 members who were in the Armed Forces. A purging of the roll after demobilisation during 1919 brought it down to 806 in 1920. In 1920 Dr. Gibb was away, and by 1921 the roll had fallen to 698. It rose to 730 again in 1922, but after that it continued to fall away until in 1926, when Dr. Gibb retired, it stood at 572.

By 1929 it had revived to 767 and remained at over 700 throughout the remainder of Mr. Blanchard's ministry, being 713 when he resigned in 1939. For eight months Dr. Inkster occupied the pulpit. A purging of the roll during this time reduced it to 689 when the Rev. Gladstone Hughes took up his St. John's ministry, but by 1942 it had temporarily revived to 728. When Mr. Hughes retired in 1947 it stood at 493 and in 1952 was 454.

Through the years the congregational activities of St. John's have been many and varied. As already mentioned, those embarked upon by particular organisations are dealt with in other parts of this narrative, but there are others which should be credited to the congregation as a whole.

In 1878 the congregation appointed one of its elders, Mr. Robert Hopkirk, to be a city missionary, paying him £120 a year for this office. He continued to do this work for three or four years. The Report for 1879 says: "Mr. Robert Hopkirk, the city missionary employed by the congregation, prosecutes his labours with great zeal and not without tokens of success. He visits in Newtown, Kilbirnie, Mitcheltown and other districts of the city; visits the homes of many who attend no place of worship and speaks to them of Christ and His Salvation. He visits the immigration barracks when the immigrants arrive; also the hospital, and holds a regular service there on Sabbath evenings which is well attended. He has also on several occasions

taken part in the religious services held at Wadestown with those employed there on the railway works." Mr. Robert Hopkirk died in 1900. He had then been an elder of St. John's for some twenty years and before that had been an elder of the Free Church of Scotland. In Wellington he was often called on to supply for pulpits. It was mainly through his labours, sustained by St. John's congregation, that the Church Room of St. James' was built and the Sabbath School established there.

The 1879 Report of the congregation had referred to "the unparalleled depression which had been experienced by all classes of the community during the past twelve months." Reports through the next ten years refer from time to time to the difficult times through which the colony was passing. These 1870's and 1880's were not easy years for church or community, and by 1888 the country was experiencing mass unemployment and the many evils in industrial conditions which accompanied that severe trade depression. The ordinary revenue of the church nevertheless remained steady at round about £1,500 through the worst years of depression, and in most of those years the congregation also managed to put amounts varying from £53 to over £1,000 towards extinguishing its debt. From 1887 to 1894 there was little change in the numbers on the roll, which remained between 416 and 449, and reflected the check to growth experienced by the country as a whole.

The Report for 1889 gives a fairly comprehensive list of the activities of the congregation at that time. Church services were held at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. on Sundays and 7.30 p.m. on Wednesdays. The Christian Fellowship Association met at 10 a.m. on Sundays; there was an 11 a.m. children's service at Mount Cook; Bible Classes and Sunday Schools met at 2.30 p.m.; and on the first Sunday of each month at the close of the evening service there was the Monthly Prayer Meeting. The Ladies' Visiting Society met in the afternoon of the first and third Tuesday of each month; the Literary Society on Tuesday evenings at 7.30; the Choir practised on Wednesdays after the mid-week service and there was also a Children's Music Class from 6.30 to 7.30 p.m. on Wednesdays; the Minister's Bible Class met on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.; and on Friday evenings there was the Band of Hope meeting from 7 to 8 p.m., followed by the weekly Sunday School Teachers' Meeting. The Report for 1890 makes

reference to a Sunday evening mission for young lads ("The lad's mission") being then conducted in the Mount Cook school-room by Messrs. Aitken and Allen. This mission had already been running for some years and the Report states that the boys "have been trained up in good habits and provided with situations where they have done credit to themselves and to those who take an interest in them. Everything is done to help and encourage the lads to a life of well-doing; the Ladies' Society assists with clothing and an annual treat is given to the lads." This mission was the forerunner of the Wellington Boys' Institute, the story of which is told elsewhere. In the following year the proposal emerged to establish the Institute and to transfer the Lads' Mission to it.

Attendance at the mid-week service at this time averaged about fifty. The 1890 Report comments particularly on the large number of young people, especially young men, who were attending the Sunday evening services. The Report for 1908 states that "as a rule the capacity of the Church is taxed to its utmost at the evening service, a large percentage of the congregation being visitors."

The 1910 Report dwells at some length on this characteristic of the St. John's congregation. It states: "In the last twelve months no fewer than 143 names have been removed from the roll. Of these, 12 are accounted for by death; 15 have left the Church and cannot be traced; leaving the extraordinary number of 116 who have received certificates of disjunction. It is true that this notable loss has been almost made up by the addition to the roll of 116 new names; but it is significant of the change taking place in the personnel of the congregation that an unusually large percentage of the newcomers are young people, not householders. The dearth of families is thrown into clear relief by the swiftly diminishing number of children presented for baptism. It is an impressive fact that from the 13th December, 1909, to the 13th June, 1910, not one child was baptised by the minister and the total of baptisms for the year is only 19."

The 1911 Report again records that "the Church is always well filled in the morning when the weather is good and the evening congregation continues to fill the whole building." In 1916 the same statement still occurs.

In December, 1903, the Church had celebrated the fiftieth

anniversary of its formation. This was the year in which the Rev. James Paterson retired after 35 years as Minister of St. John's, and in which Dr. Gibb embarked upon his 23-year ministry in the Church. In 1904 Dr. Gibb commenced a series of week-night talks following the Wednesday prayer meeting, which in 1903 had taken the place of the mid-week service, but from the Annual Report of the Session we gather that they were not well patronised.

In 1919, for the first time in sixteen years, Dr. Gibb failed to occupy the pulpit because of an illness. This was the year of the severe influenza epidemic and the St. John's Sunday School buildings were used as a temporary hospital and accommodated 80 patients.

In this same year the death is recorded of Mr. James McKerrow, who had been a member of the Church since its early days, and an elder for 38 years. He had been Chairman of the Presbyterian Church Board of Property, as well as serving on other Assembly Committees. It is also the year in which Mr. Harry Glover's name first appears in the Board of Managers and the Church Property Committee. Mr. Glover has just this year (1953) retired from the Property Committee chairmanship, though still a member of the Committee.

For those who are interested in records it might here be mentioned that the greatest number of persons to take Communion in St. John's was 586 at the Jubilee Communion in 1913. The next largest Communion was in June, 1936, when 546 people took communion.

St. John's has played an important part in the development of other churches in the Wellington Presbytery and in the support of Mission and Church extension work generally. Mention has already been made of the establishment of the Church Room of St. James and of the institution of services at Wadestown.

In 1899 the General Assembly established a New Century Fund for Church extension work and during the year St. John's congregation contributed £1,403 to the fund. In 1903, the year of the Church's Jubilee, a St. John's Bursary was subscribed by members of the congregation to assist a student in the Divinity Hall at Dunedin. Two years later members of the congregation, together with members of St. Andrew's, purchased a site for a

Church in Kelburn and were working towards the erection of a Church there.

In 1906 the Report of the Session records that "During the period under review the mission charge at Brooklyn, which had been from its inception under the fostering care of the (St. John's) Session, and especially Mr. John Reith, was formed into a fully sanctioned charge by the Wellington Presbytery, and in due course called to its pastorate the Rev. P. C. Rennie." In 1909, when the Kelburn congregation was formed, St. John's again lost a number of members to a new Church which it had itself largely sponsored.

In 1913 St. John's decided to provide annually the salary of a missionary in the foreign field (£120 being then set as the target) and to adopt the Rev. George McNeur of the Chinese Mission Field. At first the contributions to this objective lagged somewhat, but by 1917 it is recorded that all arrears had been paid off and that the congregation was raising sufficient annually for this purpose. The Report for 1932-33 records that "the Rev. George McNeur was appointed as the pioneer missionary in China of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. The last 18 years he has been mainly supported by our congregation. . . ." He retired in 1940, still "St. John's Own Missionary".

In the year 1913 Mr. Ad. Howitt was ordained an elder of St. John's, an office he still holds forty years later. No man could have St. John's more at heart. This present narrative is largely gleaned from his personal collection of documents, annotated in many places with his own corrections and notes. To very many people outside St. John's, as well as within its congregation—and many of them scattered over many parts of the world—he will be remembered as the tall, white-haired man who shook hands and spoke a kindly word of friendship to them as they entered the Church.

In 1917, when new buildings were erected for Scots College, it is recorded that some £4,000 was given by members of St. John's Church out of the £5,000 donated.

The finances of the congregation at various earlier periods in its history are of some interest. In its first seven years its ordinary revenue averaged £419 per year. In 1878 it had reached £1,081, of which £446 was derived from pew rents and £550 from collections which were at that time taken at the door.

We have already seen how, within 30 years, the congregation built three successive churches and successive Sunday School buildings. In 1885 there remained a debt of some £5,000. By 1896 this had been reduced to £1,500. Other items of expenditure were from time to time incurred, however, such as the building of the Bible Class Room and the extensions to the Sunday School buildings), and in 1912 the Church still carried a debt of £1,300. At the Jubilee Service on December 2, 1913, a special collection was taken up to clear this debt. £1,260 was contributed on the day and the total of £1,600 was realised when all donations were included.

For the ten years from 1886 to 1895 the average revenue of the congregation was some £1,630 per year or £3/16/- per member. For the ten years 1908 to 1917 the average revenue was £3,170 or some £4/2/- per member. From 1930 to 1939 the average revenue was about £2,640 per year or some £3/18/- per member. The 1930 Report says: "We have reached the goal of owing no man anything."

In 1878 the Rev. James Paterson's stipend was £600. In 1907 Dr. Gibb's stipend was £700. In 1930 Mr. Blanchard's stipend was £700, plus a car allowance of £100, but was voluntarily reduced by £100 in 1932. The stipend remained at £600 plus £100 car allowance until 1950, when the combined amount of stipend and car allowance was raised to the £800 at which it had stood in 1930.

In 1931 the Annual Report makes first reference to the Endowment Fund in these words: "The matter of the establishment of an Endowment Fund has been under consideration for some time. Hitherto the interest from legacies has been used for the purpose of general Church expenditure. The Managers feel that this is wrong in principle and that it would be more in keeping with the minds of the various legators if the bequests were placed in an Endowment Fund and built up together with the annual increments of interest until a substantial fund is attained. This fund will inevitably be required sooner or later, as the present Church is a wooden structure. An Endowment Fund was accordingly brought into being on the recommendation of the Finance Committee by a resolution passed by the Board of Managers on 12th August, 1931." Two men in particular, Mr. Malcolm Fraser and Mr. Robert Fleming, should be

mentioned for their work in sponsoring and nursing the Fund through to maturity. Mr. Robert Fleming became Treasurer to the Board of Managers in 1928 and was Chairman of its Finance Committee for many years until ill health necessitated his recent relinquishment of that office. The Endowment Fund reached £10,000 in 1952.

Several other points of interest in the history of the congregation deserve mention before we pass on to the story of its various organisations which within themselves, of course, contain much of the story of St. John's as a whole.

In 1892, and for a few years afterwards, a congregational quarterly news bulletin called *The Record* was issued. After this there was no congregational magazine until 1936, when the *Review* began to be issued. It ceased publication in 1939. In 1943 a new printed news-sheet, the *St. John's Messenger*, made its appearance. During the war years special issues of the *Messenger* were prepared for St. John's members serving in the Armed Forces overseas. The *Messenger* continues to appear quarterly.

In 1928 After-Church suppers were re-instituted on every second Sunday evening in the Basement Parlour, members and adherents receiving personal invitations according to districts. During the 1914-1918 War After-Church suppers had been held each Sunday night. In 1943, to meet the needs of servicemen on leave, of American Forces stationed around Wellington, and of personnel from ships in port, an After-Church Social Hour was again arranged at the close of evening service on each Sunday. In 1945, with the passing of the special war-time need, the Social Hour was held once a month, and so continues.

The broadcasting of services in St. John's is first recorded in 1929, together with an interesting anecdote. A letter received from Honolulu said: "On Saturday night, October 5, 1929, we were listening-in to stations over in California when we had a rather severe earthquake. Of course we turned the radio off. . . . In about fifteen minutes I thought I would tune in on another California station, but just as the dial got to No. 740 we heard a prayer just as clearly as if it were in the same room. . . ." It was St. John's service being broadcast by 2YA.

In 1931 the most severe trade depression in its history

gripped New Zealand, and in the following year Session and Managers of St. John's set up a special committee to deal with cases of need within the congregation. In addition the Church accepted responsibility in the Te Aro area for assisting in relief there. The 1935 Report states: "The Minister and three Elders have continued to provide the greater part of the active assistance required by the Mayor's Te Aro Flat Inter-Church Relief Committee in dispensing relief and in assisting the many distressed families in the district where the need is greater than in any other area."

Amongst the elders was Mr. Henry Mainland, who died in 1944. He joined the Church about 1890 and was soon teaching in the Sunday School. He became a manager in 1900 and an elder in 1903, continuing in this office for over forty years. The records refer particularly to his outstanding service in visiting during the years of his eldership. He was a prominent man in the business world and for three years was President of the New Zealand Employers' Federation.

In 1941, as the numbers of St. John's folk serving in the Armed Forces in World War II mounted, the Session set up a special committee to maintain contact with them. The Rev. Gladstone Hughes wrote to every member in the Forces and Mr. W. J. Ferguson wrote letters to absent Bible Class members. Their Communion cards were sent regularly to absent members, and the Women's Association sent parcels to them from a fund provided by the congregation. A photograph of the interior of the Church was also sent to every St. John's man serving overseas.

In 1878 there were ten elders and sixteen managers, plus the treasurer and the secretary. Six elders were inducted in 1887 and six in 1888. The total strength of the Session was 18 in that year. By 1901 the Church office-bearers had been increased further to 20 elders and 21 managers, and in 1902 the number of elders was further increased to 25. In 1923 there were 33 elders, which would appear to be the largest number St. John's has had. In later years the number has remained round about 25. This was the number in 1952 when there were 22 members of the Board of Management. In 1951, for the first time in St. John's, three women were elected to the Board of Managers — Mrs. A. Harvie, Miss Mary Chappell, and Miss Pearl Brodie.



Rev. John Moir



Rev. James Paterson

No story of the St. John's congregation is complete without mention of the Choir. The earliest records of the Choir were, like so much of the other early records of St. John's, lost in the 1884 fire. The first organist and choirmaster we have a record of was Mr. Carver, who was occupying the position in 1872 at a remuneration of £26/1/- a year. He was succeeded by Mr. Raymond in 1876. The first organist and choirmaster to play on the new organ in 1886 was Mr. C. England, who held the position until 1893. Mr. Peterson, his successor, died as a result of an accident within a few months of his appointment. In 1895 Mr. Maugham Barnett was appointed to the position and held it with great distinction for nearly 18 years. Throughout most of these years the Choir membership stood at about forty—sometimes more, sometimes less. In 1906, when it had 48 members, the number included seven tenors and eleven basses. Mr. Maugham Barnett was succeeded by Mr. C. W. Kerry, another distinguished musician, who held the position for 19

years. (We hope that Mr. Kerry will be present at the Centennial functions.) He was followed by Mr. W. L. Haggitt who, with a short break of service in the Armed Forces in 1943, was organist and choirmaster until the end of 1949. Mr. Brian Withers succeeded Mr. Haggitt in 1950 and was followed by Mr. Stuart Canon, who took up the position this year.

Throughout the years the Choir Roll has included many well-known singers and many records of long and loyal service. At all times the standard which St. John's Choir has set itself has been a high one and in 1936 it won the Choir Contest at the Wellington Competitions. It has held together through many difficult times and contributed faithfully and excellently to the service of Praise. It received its present robes in 1945, the gift of a number of members of the congregation.

THE PASTORAL CARE OF ST. JOHN'S
ST. JOHN'S HAS HAD SIX INDUCTED MINISTERS IN A HUNDRED years, including our present Minister. They are:—

The Rev. John Moir, 1853 to 1867.

The Rev. James Paterson, 1868 to 1903.

The Rev. James Gibb, D.D., 1903 to 1926.

The Rev. J. R. Blanchard, B.A., 1927 to 1939.

The Rev. P. Gladstone Hughes, B.A., 1940 to 1947.

The Rev. William P. Temple, M.A., B.D., 1948—

It has also had four Deaconesses, including our present Deaconess:—

Miss Lilian Lang (Sister Lilian), 1905 to 1907.

Miss Mabel Cartwright (Sister Mabel), 1909 to 1911.

Miss Nora Dick (Sister Nora), 1912 to 1915.

Miss Nessie Morgan (Sister Nessie), 1945 to 1948 and 1951—

The Rev. John Moir was in his 46th year when he left Menmuir in Scotland to come to Wellington with his wife and family. (It had been John Moir to whom David Livingstone first confided his intention of becoming a missionary and who had recommended Livingstone to the Committee of the London Missionary Society.) Mr. Moir was a good scholar and a most diligent man in his pastoral work. His years as Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Willis Street (it was not re-named St.

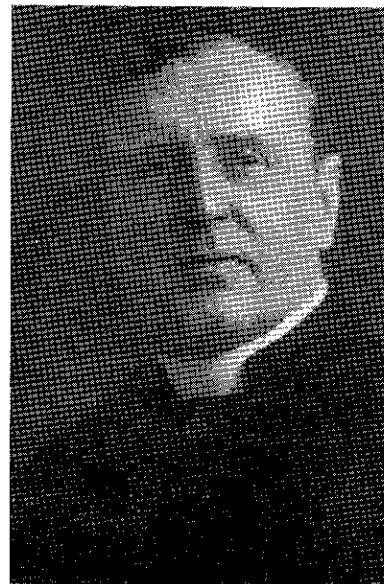
John's until after he had retired) were years of considerable difficulty, but nevertheless fruitful years. Mr. Moir had borne his full share of the work of establishing new charges and the Wellington Presbytery, as well as of building up his own congregation from the sixty-nine who called him to nearly two hundred when he retired in 1867. He died in October, 1895.

On the Rev. John Moir's retirement from the active ministry in 1867, the pulpit was supplied by the Rev. John Hall while a petition was sent through the Wellington Presbytery to the Free Church of Scotland asking it to select and send out a successor. The choice fell on the Rev. James Paterson, then Minister at Everton Valley Church, Liverpool. James Paterson, who was 38 when he received the call to come to Wellington, had studied at the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. He and his wife arrived in Wellington in August, 1868, and he was inducted on November 27.

This induction is of special interest. Because of the Maori Wars the scattered ministers of the Wellington Presbytery could not leave their houses and families and consequently no meeting of Presbytery could be convened. In November, however, a General Assembly of the Northern Churches (north and south did not unite until 1901) met in Wellington and the induction was therefore performed by the General Assembly.

Mr. Paterson was Minister of St. John's for thirty-five years, serving his parish with outstanding fidelity and piloting the congregation through many momentous events. He saw his congregation grow from some 200 to 638 when he retired in 1902, and the Sunday Schools reach their zenith of 946 children with 76 teachers. For many years he was a member of the Senate of the University of New Zealand, served on Education Board and the Board of Governors of the High Schools, and in 1902 was second Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. He served in many other capacities. The records say of him: "His long association with the congregation, his kindly ways with the people, his devoted ministrations to the sick, the aged and the sorrow-laden, had earned for him the love of his own people and the respect of the community." He died in 1925 at the age of 96.

When the Rev. James Paterson retired the congregation called Dr. James Gibb, who had been Minister of First Church,



Rev. James Gibb



Rev. J. R. Blanchard

Dunedin, for 17 years. Dr. Gibb was inducted on August 12, 1903. He had received his training at Aberdeen University and then at Edinburgh, but went to Australia for his first charge. He had been a little over three years in Australia when called to First Church at Dunedin. During his seventeen years there he became known for his strong personality and tireless energy. In 1901 the union of the two Presbyterian Churches in New Zealand was achieved largely by his personal leadership in the matter. When he came to St. John's, therefore, his stature was already great. He was a deep thinker with a robust and stimulating outlook on the affairs of both Church and community. His ministry from the pulpit was such as to fill the Church on Sundays and build its Communion Roll up to over 800. But it was in his parish visiting that he was most indefatigable. His two predecessors had both been diligent in their pastoral work, but Dr. Gibb eclipsed them with a record of something like a thousand visits a year for many years. Despite the unremitting fidelity of



Rev. P. Gladstone Hughes

his parish work, Dr. Gibb also maintained the vigour of his work for the Church at large. He became Convener of the General Assembly's Home Mission Committee and re-organised the Home Mission work. He was the prime mover in establishing a Presbyterian Orphanage and Social Service Association in Wellington, and a powerful champion of the Bible in Schools movement. His initiative is also to be seen in the founding of the Church Colleges of Scots and Queen Margaret's. He remained Minister of St. John's for over 22 years, resigning in 1926. He died on October 24, 1935, one of the great men of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand.

St. John's sent its next call to the Rev. J. R. Blanchard, then occupying a pulpit in Perth. He was inducted on March 17, 1927. Once again St. John's found itself with a minister of robust vigour with a strong and stimulating pulpit message and great diligence in his pastoral visiting. Mr. Blanchard also had a strong leadership in youth activities. Despite the continuing slow encroachment of industry in the neighbourhood of St. John's and the inevitable shift of people to the suburbs, Mr. Blanchard held the congregation at over 700 throughout his ministry. He played a considerable part in the Church as a whole, being Convener of the Assembly's Committee on Church Union and of its Public Questions Committee. He was also President of

the New Zealand Alliance. In 1939 Mr. Blanchard accepted a call to Adelaide after occupying the St. John's pulpit for twelve years. He continues the work of the ministry in Australia, where he has similarly taken a large and vigorous part, and has been called to be Moderator-General of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the Commonwealth.

During the pulpit vacancy following Mr. Blanchard's resignation, Dr. J. G. Inkster, of Toronto, Canada, supplied in the pulpit for some eight months and left a very deep impression on St. John's. The vacancy was filled by a call to the Rev. P. Gladstone Hughes, then at St. Andrew's Church, Auckland, who was inducted on November 21, 1940. It was through Dr. Gibb that Mr. Hughes had originally left Wales for New Zealand. Mr. Hughes came to the pulpit of St. John's in the early stages of the second world war and ministered to the congregation during years of difficulty and sorrow. Mr. and Mrs. Hughes lost their only son on active service before they had been very long in St. John's, but their strong faith shone like a beacon light through their personal grief. Mr. Hughes will be long remembered by those who drew courage and comfort from his personal ministering to them in sad days. He moved easily amongst his congregation, visiting with warm friendliness, taking a personal interest in all their activities, preaching with deep and fearless sincerity. He was Convener of the General Assembly's Public Questions Committee and one of the originators and second Chairman of the Inter-Church Council. He retired in October, 1947, when his health had begun to cause concern, and passed away in January, 1950.

The congregation called the Rev. William P. Temple, of the Barclay Church, Edinburgh, a graduate in Arts and Divinity of Glasgow University, as successor to Mr. Hughes. Mr. Temple was inducted on October 28, 1948. He moves in our midst with personal charm, bringing to his pulpit a strong evangelism and a fine combination of direct simplicity, intense but easy relevance, and winged lightness of touch. His personal gifts as singer and musician are also greatly appreciated.

In speaking of the Ministers of St. John's we should mention two who, although not pastors to the congregation, have had very special associations with it. The Rev. George H. McNeur is spoken of elsewhere in this narrative as "St. John's" own



Sister Mabel



Sister Lilian

missionary". For close on 40 years he gave his all to evangelistic work among the people of China. He died in 1953. The other minister is the Very Rev. J. H. McKenzie who, for so many years, was to be seen in his pew in St. John's regularly morning and night even to his 99th year. He died in 1949 just short of his hundredth birthday. He was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1910 and for the next 25 years was Clerk of the Assembly, retiring from that position in 1936 at the age of 87, still a man of exceptional mental and physical vigour and great spiritual strength.

THE WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

SUCH RECORDS AS SURVIVED THE FIRE OF 1884 DO NOT TELL US much about the work and organisation of the womenfolk of early St. John's. We know that in the days of the Rev. John Moir they were working for missions and receiving missionary news in one form or another. They also provided an annual congregational tea and no doubt were then, as now, the strong and willing nucleus of much congregational activity. It seems, however, that they had no formal name for themselves and no formal organisa-

tion. Until 1887 they were, at their most formal, just "the ladies".

The 1880's were years of increasing depression amongst the New Zealand communities, with much unemployment and poverty and bad industrial conditions. It was perhaps fitting that the call of humanity should be the circumstance which first bonded the ladies together in a defined organisation. On August 9, 1887, they formed a Ladies' Visiting Society "to minister to those who may need help, to visit them in their homes, and to bring the influences of Christian sympathy and kindness to bear in alleviating and brightening their conditions." It also arranged for visiting of all new members of the congregation. The Ladies' Visiting Society met regularly on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 2.30 p.m. and special collections were taken up after each Communion Service to supply them with finance for their activities. It remained in independent existence until 1911.

In 1889 the name was amended to The Ladies' Visiting and Dorcas Society and in 1890, when Miss Troup was its secretary, it fostered a junior branch to include young ladies not in the senior organisation. This was the Young Ladies' Dorcas and Literary Society which met in the evenings on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

This junior organisation in its turn formed a St. John's Children's Sewing Class in 1897 to teach poorer children sewing and to assist them to make garments for themselves and others. Between 50 and 60 children attended the class, which met every second Tuesday at 7.0 p.m. in what was then known as the Parlour. When the Young Ladies' Dorcas and Literary Society ceased its activities in 1900, Miss Steele, with the help of some friends, kept the Girls' Sewing Class going. It then still had a membership of about 40 and continued in existence till 1908.

Although they had the Ladies' Visiting and Dorcas Society to look after the poor and needy, to visit amongst the congregation, and to work for the orphanages and perform many other good works within the New Zealand community, the womenfolk of St. John's demanded more of themselves. They were aware of another call, more distant, yet strong in its urgency; and on February 12, 1900, they formed the St. John's Women's Missionary Association with the objective of raising £200 each year to pay the salary of one missionary. The first president

of the Association was Miss Glasgow. These 38 women, who met on the third Friday afternoon of each month, were largely the same women who met also on two Tuesday afternoons in each month as the Ladies' Visiting and Dorcas Society, but through two separate organisations they found service in two fields of Christian enterprise. The new Women's Missionary Association (later the Women's Association) became the historic women's organisation in St. John's—the harbinger of a succession which, although it has recently ceased to be known by its historic name, is still continuing.

The Report of the Women's Missionary Association for 1902 says: "The question of forming a Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union for Wellington, Taranaki and Hawke's Bay has been considered by our Association during the year. When the Assembly met in November, a special meeting was held attended by representatives from the Presbyterian Churches of Wellington and a Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union was formed." (The P.W.M.U. was already established elsewhere in New Zealand.) From 1902 onwards, therefore, the Women's Missionary Association was, in personnel, also the St. John's branch of the P.W.M.U.



Sister Nora



Sister Nessie

The afternoon meetings of the Ladies' Visiting and Dorcas Society and the Women's Missionary Association could not be attended by many of the younger women. With the passing of the hard times of the 'eighties the Dorcas work, moreover, had lost something of its urgency and of its appeal to younger women. When the Young Ladies' Dorcas and Literary Society went out of existence in 1900, there thus remained a gap in the Church activities for these younger women and this gap was filled in 1904 with the formation of a Young Women's Missionary Guild with 45 members. The Guild met in the Parlour every second Tuesday evening at 7.30 (i.e., immediately following the Girls' Sewing Class). From the outset it made the Maori field its own special interest, working throughout 1904 for the Maori Girls' Training Home at Turakina.

The Young Women's Missionary Guild continued an uninterrupted existence until 1925. In 1911 it changed its meeting time to every second Monday evening and in 1914 it joined the P.W.M.U. In 1916 we know that it still had a membership of about 40. In 1918 it introduced a programme of lectures and music to add a more social side to its sewing activities. Right through to its disbanding in 1925 it continued to work specially for Maori Missions and the Turakina Maori Girls' School.

In 1906, under the auspices partly of the Women's Missionary Association and partly of the Ladies' Visiting and Dorcas Society, a Mothers' Meeting was begun by Sister Lilian. This group was formed in the first place to befriend and assist the mothers of lads connected with the Boys' Institute, meetings being held every Wednesday afternoon to sew children's garments. The Mothers' Meeting continued in existence until 1942.

About the same time as the Mothers' Meeting was established (in 1905 or 1906), the Women's Missionary Association had commenced the Maori Mission Birthday League. The Association had also been largely responsible for the appointment of Miss Lilian Lang (Sister Lilian) as deaconess in August, 1905, and raised a considerable part of her salary.

In 1911 the Women's Missionary Association and the Ladies' Visiting and Dorcas Society merged into one organisation as the Women's Association. It had three distinct activities—as a Dorcas Society doing sewing and mending mainly for the orphanages; as a Mission Society and P.W.M.U. branch; and

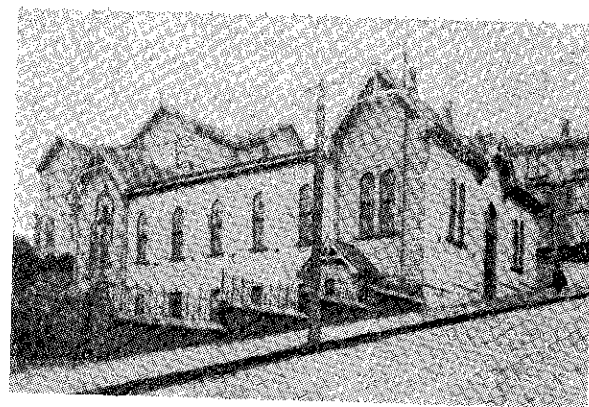
as a Visiting Society. It continued to have three meetings a month until 1940. In 1939 it had changed one of its monthly meetings from a work meeting to a social gathering and in 1940 this social gathering was placed on a quarterly basis. This left two regular afternoon meetings each month, on one of which the Association met as the St. John's branch of the P.W.M.U

The active membership of the Women's Association has varied considerably from time to time — 55 in 1915; 30 in 1926; 68 in 1934; 31 in 1939; 55 in 1942.

On August 18, 1929, an evening sewing class was formed to meet on two Monday evenings each month in conjunction with the afternoon meetings of the Women's Association. It will be recalled that the Young Women's Missionary Guild had lapsed in 1925 and in the intervening years there had been no church organisation for women unable to attend afternoon meetings. Between 1900 and 1904 this same gap had occurred but had refused to remain a vacuum. The evening sewing class of 1929 was, in fact, something of a counterpart (or even of a continuation) of the Young Women's Missionary Guild of 1904 which in its turn had filled the gap left by the Young Ladies' Dorcas and Literary Society of 1890.

In 1933 the sewing class changed to monthly Monday evening meetings and took the name of Young Women's Guild. In that same year it held its meetings in the homes of members of the congregation, who acted as hostesses and thereby adopted a custom which continued until 1942. After 1942 meetings were held in the Parlour (now the Fellowship Room). It had two further changes of name, first to Young Women's Evening Guild and then, in 1937, this was shortened to Evening Guild.

The Evening Guild followed closely on the footsteps of the earlier Guild. Each meeting was devoted to hearing missionary news, making garments for the Maori Mission fields, darning and mending for the orphanages, and the preparation of Christmas parcels for Home Mission manses. In 1944 a change in the content of its evening activities was introduced in the form of talks, song recitals and a lantern lecture. In the next few years the social fellowship aspect of Evening Guild was further developed with film evenings, occasionally a one-act play, demonstrations of floral decorating, tatting and other things of interest.



The Church Hall and Class Rooms

Like the Women's Association, the Evening Guild has had varying fortunes in its membership. In 1937 it had 30 members; in 1939 there were 49; 35 in 1943; 50 in 1947; 37 in 1949; and 60 in 1952.

During the depression years of the early 1930's the Women's Association and the Evening Guild devoted much of their efforts to assisting needy families. During 1933 the Women's Association, for instance, made some 368 garments for needy families and the orphanage at Island Bay. In these years the Women's Association also held an annual sale of work and it is interesting to note in passing that the men of the congregation provided a Men's Stall. In 1933 the Sale of Work raised £254, and in 1934 £236. The holding of an annual Sale of Work was discontinued in 1937 in favour of direct giving and the sum of £203 was contributed by this means in 1937. Over a period of many years the Women's Association has contributed a substantial part of St. John's budget assessment every year.

In 1941 the Women's Association was still continuing the visiting of new members of the congregation, a work which had been begun by the original Ladies' Visiting Society of 1887.

In 1946 the Cradle Roll Committee of the Sunday School formed a new women's group, the Friendly Circle, for mothers otherwise not closely linked with church activities. At the end of twelve months this group had a membership of 47 meeting on two afternoons each month, but by 1949 it had lapsed.

In 1952 the Women's Association, meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month, took the name of Afternoon Guild.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

IN ST. JOHN'S, CONGREGATION AND SUNDAY SCHOOL HAVE marched together from the very beginning. The first Sunday School was formed in 1853 when the congregation itself was formed and by January, 1854, it had 40 scholars on the roll. Unfortunately we know very little of the Sunday School's earliest years beyond the fact that it grew steadily. By 1860 it had a roll of sixty. In 1872 St. John's also took over a Sunday School which had been conducted in Tory Street by Mr. G. C. Sage. For sometime this continued to be known as the Tory Street Sunday School, but the name was then changed to St. John's Sunday School, Mount Cook. The Mount Cook Sunday School and the Willis Street Sunday School continued side by side until the former closed down in 1916. Shortly after it took over the Mount Cook Sunday School, St. John's also established a Sunday School at Newtown. When St. James's Church was established in 1885 this Newtown school was handed over to St. James's.

Until 1875 the Sunday School met in the Church and in an annexe which had been added to it. When the new Church was built in 1875 a separate Sunday School hall was erected. This was destroyed by the fire of 1884, and a new schoolroom (the present Sunday School Hall on Dixon Street) and adjoining class rooms were built to accommodate 300 to 400 children and were opened in November, 1884. In 1902 extensive additions were made to the Sunday School buildings, including a room for the Young Women's Bible Class and a social parlour and gymnasium for young people. To erect these additions extra land had been purchased in 1901 at the back of the hall.

The first detailed information extant about the Sunday School relates to 1878, by which time there were 269 scholars at Willis Street and 210 at Mount Cook. These two schools had, in addition to the two superintendents (Mr. F. H. Fraser and Mr. Alexander Hopkirk), 43 teachers, two librarians and a secretary. The Sunday School teachers met regularly every Friday evening from 8 to 9 p.m. to prepare their lessons for the Sunday afternoon classes, a custom which continued until 1911.

The Sunday School rolls continued to increase. By 1890 there were 435 scholars at Willis Street and 490 at Mount Cook, a total of 925, with 65 teachers. The record was not reached, however, until 1899 when the Willis Street roll reached 524 and the Mount Cook roll stood at 422. In that year there were 76 teachers for these 946 children.

It is not known when Mr. F. H. Fraser first became Superintendent of the Willis Street Sunday School, but he was already Superintendent when he was ordained an elder in 1873. He retired in 1902 but remained Honorary Superintendent until his death in 1912. In 1882 Mr. W. Allen succeeded Mr. A. Hopkirk as Superintendent of the Mount Cook School and held that post until 1906, having then completed 24 years as Superintendent and 30 years of Sunday School teaching. These were indeed proud records of Sunday School service, outshone only by that of Mr. William Hopkirk who, when he died in 1936, had given 61 years of continuous service in the Sunday School. He first became a Sunday School teacher in St. John's in 1875, became Deputy Superintendent of the Willis Street School in 1895, Superintendent in 1904 and Honorary Superintendent in 1922. May those scholars who win the Hopkirk Memorial Prize always remember that this is what it commemorates.

Mr. A. D. Johnston, who had been associated with the Sunday School for many years, followed Mr. Hopkirk as Superintendent and served well until removing to Featherston. Mr. L. R. Blake then occupied the position with, as the Annual Reports record, distinction and singleness of purpose. In October, 1933, he found that periods of travel would prevent his continuing and Mr. R. B. Fowler was invited to become Superintendent and still serves in this position.

In the 1880's the Sunday School librarians were busy people, and in 1886 it is recorded that 226 new volumes were added to the libraries in that year alone. Many of them, no doubt, were not books which would be chosen today. To a great extent the public library system supplies the needs of today's children, and Sunday School prizes and family bookshelves make their contributions in a day when books for children are plentiful and attractive. Towards the turn of the century, however, the ministry of the printed word was an essential part of the service of the Church to its young people.

From 1900 onwards the numbers attending the Mount Cook school declined. By 1906 they were down to 228; to 94 in 1909; to 59 in 1914 and to 39 when it was closed in 1916. Its Superintendent from 1911 till it closed was Mr. Alex. Johnston, who had been on its staff since 1890.

The roll of the Willis Street school also moved downward. In 1903 there were 497 scholars but by 1905 the number was down to 275. It revived to 319 in 1908, but this was the last occasion on which the roll exceeded three hundred scholars. From 1909 to 1922 the numbers remained fairly constant between 212 and 259. The Report of the Church for 1909 says: "There is no blinking the fact that people of the Presbyterian persuasion are making for the suburbs in ever increasing numbers, and the opening of suburban charges with their Sabbath Schools makes the task of keeping our attendance as high as it was even seven or eight years ago not only difficult but impossible."

In the printed report for 1878 there is mention of the Anniversary Day Service at which the children attended. Singing by the children became a special feature of these occasions and the sermon was a special one for the children. In 1891, to assist the finances of the Sunday Schools, it was decided that in future years there should be a separate Sunday School Anniversary Service in May, the whole of the collections on that day to go to the Sunday School funds. This in no way affected the Anniversary Day service at the end of the year which the children continued to attend. This special Sunday School Anniversary Service in May was continued until 1916. The Sunday School Annual Treat, held at localities such as Day's Bay, Petone and Khandallah, is also referred to in the earliest reports. This outing was additional to the annual congregational picnic.

Here and there in the Sunday School reports are glimpses of other activities as when, at the 1885 New Zealand Industrial Exhibition, the Sunday School combined with others to render a cantata; or when, in 1901, a group from the Sunday School visited the Public Hospital on Christmas morning and sang carols.

The Report for 1907 records that the Sunday School had received a general overhaul during the year. All classes had been furnished with maps, pictures and other apparatus and the infant department had been re-arranged on kindergarten lines. Two

years later (in 1909) the Cradle Roll was established with 60 names on the Willis Street roll and 29 on the Mount Cook roll, and this work has been faithfully carried on ever since.

During the years of the Great War the Sunday School continued quietly and steadily with about the same numbers on its roll. In 1923, however, the Junior and Intermediate Bible Classes were separated from the Sunday School, with a consequent fall of 45 in the roll, which was reduced to 196. Independently of this cause, however, the Sunday School experienced a further decline in numbers until in 1934 its roll showed 113 scholars. In 1937 there were 119 and today there are 150 scholars, with 19 teachers.

During 1938 it was thought wise to meet the demand for a change from afternoon to morning school. Of recent years the school has endeavoured to keep up with modern trends of teaching by using visual aids. Through the generosity of members of the congregation it has been able to purchase a film strip projector and films, an episcopope and screen. The school works on the graded system of departments.

THE YOUNG MEN'S BIBLE CLASS

ONE OF THE EARLIEST REPORTS WE HAVE OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, the Report for the year ending on December 31, 1878, states on page 6:

"The Young Men's Bible Class, which meets in the managers' room on Sunday afternoons at 2.30, is very efficiently taught by Mr. Thomas McKenzie, who has conducted that class now for many years."

That appears to be as near as we can get to the origins of a St. John's Y.M.B.C. We know that Mr. Thomas Wilmor McKenzie was born in 1827 and arrived in Wellington on March 6, 1840, aboard the *Adelaide*. He saw the beginnings of St. John's and was probably amongst those who heard the Rev. John Moir preach his first sermon. McKenzie would be 26 years old then. It is possible that the Young Men's Bible Class was established as a senior group within the Sunday School even before 1860 and that he was its first leader. He died in 1910 after a long life of service in St. John's.

The 1878 Report also refers to the Minister's Bible Class which met on Thursday evenings — young women from 7 to

8 p.m. and young men from 8 to 9 p.m. At that time there was also a St. John's Literary Society closely associated with the Bible Classes, and although this Literary Society went into recess after the Church was burnt down in 1884, it was revived again in 1887 with a membership of over 30. It went out of existence in 1894 but was revived from 1903 to 1914 as the Literary and Debating Society.

In these early years the Bible Classes were senior classes within the general organisation of the Sunday School. They were nevertheless Bible Classes by name and function and, despite their close connection with the Sunday School were, in the earlier Reports of the Church, reported on under the Session report and not under the Sunday School report. Indeed, it is after the formal separation of 1888 that they are more frequently reported within the Sunday School reports. Suffice it to say that both a Young Men's and a Young Women's Bible Class existed under those names and, although associated with the Sunday School, were regarded as distinct entities long before 1888.

In 1888, when Mr. George Troup came to Wellington from Dunedin, the Young Men's Bible Class was at a low ebb with only six members. In August, 1888, George Troup took over the leadership of the Class. He first set himself to the task of reviving the membership by establishing personal contact with those families who had young men who might join. The task was not easy and at one stage Mr. Troup asked the four remaining members to make it a matter of prayer for two weeks as to whether they should continue as a class. They continued and the membership slowly grew. In 1889 Mr. Troup decided that new methods were needed if the Class was to attract more young men and he embarked upon a co-operative basis of leadership and activity. The Class became a Class "run by young men for young men." The new method was outstandingly successful. In 1894 a Class on a similar basis was formed in St. Paul's, Christchurch. Others followed and the St. John's method introduced in 1889 became the pattern for Presbyterian Bible Classes throughout New Zealand.

The Class itself has chosen August, 1888, the assumption of leadership by George Troup, as its formal date of birth. It is really much older than that and the year 1888 marks a re-birth rather than a birth. It is a good date to select, and in any case

the date of the first birth of the Class cannot now be fixed with any certainty. Mr. (later Sir) George Troup remained leader of the Class until 1908, when he was succeeded by Messrs. C. A. Redgrave and J. S. Butler as joint leaders.

In 1872 St. John's had taken over the Mount Cook (Tory Street) Sunday School and a second Young Men's Bible Class was formed there under the leadership of Mr. W. Allan. In 1882 he was succeeded by Mr. J. G. W. Aitken, who continued to lead that class for 25 years. The Mount Cook Class was a smaller Class which slowly declined in numbers until it was finally merged into the Willis Street Class in 1914. The main initiative rested with the original or Willis Street Class throughout and no further mention will be made here of the Mount Cook Class.

For a number of years after 1878 the "Minister's" Bible Class continued to meet on Thursday evenings in two groups — girls from 7 to 8 p.m. and boys from 8 to 9 p.m. Some forty to fifty young people attended this Thursday class. The Minister's Bible Class appears to have lapsed in 1889 and its lapsing is probably associated with the formation in that year of a St. John's Christian Fellowship Association meeting on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. The object of the Association was to bring young men connected with the Church together for Christian fellowship and Bible study. It lost ground to the rapidly growing Young Men's Bible Class and appears to have lapsed in 1898. The Christian Fellowship Association is not without its lasting achievements, however, for in 1894 some of its members began conducting a Sunday morning service for children at Wadestown, which was then the site of a railway construction camp.

In 1893 a Young People's Christian Endeavour Society was formed, meeting on Monday evenings at 7.30 p.m. This also was organised in senior and junior sections. The senior section overlapped too much on the Bible Classes and went out of existence in 1904. The junior section closed down in 1907.

It is very evident that the 1890's were years of intense youth activity in St. John's. Much of this activity appears to have been experimental rather than permanent — a feeling-out for avenues of fellowship and service. The Young Men's Bible Class was not adversely affected by the appearance or disappearance of new organisations; it pursued a strong and steady progress. In 1894

it started a library of its own, purchasing a book-case for £1/10/-, which was placed in the Managers' Room, and secured 120 books as a nucleus.

In the same year (1894) the St. John's Young Men's Bible Class began editing *Our Magazine* twice yearly as a Bible Class journal. In 1899 the Class changed the title to *The Young Man's Magazine* and issued it quarterly for all Y.M.B.C.'s throughout New Zealand. The Class continued to edit and publish this journal until July, 1907, when it handed the journal over to the Bible Class Union for publication in Dunedin, together with assets which exceeded liabilities by over £500. The circulation had passed the 4,000 mark in 1904. The change was not propitious and the magazine lapsed in 1909.

In 1896 the important decision was taken by the Board of Managers to build a class room for the Young Men's Bible Class and the Class was installed in the building which it has occupied ever since.

Between 1897 and 1902 another important development occurred in which the St. John's Y.M.B.C. took the initiative. In 1896 the secretary of the St. John's Class moved to Christchurch and became secretary of the St. Paul's Class there. As a result of this personal link the St. John's Class suggested that its members might pay a visit to St. Paul's. The visit of one Class to the other became an annual affair. In 1900 the visit took the form of the first Easter Camp. In 1901 other Bible Classes were invited to share in the Camp and in 1902 the Bible Class Union was established by those attending the Camp. The badge of the Bible Class Movement was designed by Mr. Ad. Howitt.

By 1902, when the Class had a membership of 77 (and when for the first time it achieved the distinction of a separate report of its own in the Church Annual Report) its members were conducting a Sunday evening service every Sunday at the Boys' Institute and a monthly Sunday morning service at Wadestown. Two years later, in 1904, the Class (then with a membership of 104) "gladly parted with a contingent to help in the formation of a class in the sister congregation of St. Andrew's." At this time, moreover, the Boys' Institute was also being carried on by the St. John's Young Men's Bible Class. In addition the Class had in hand or promised an amount of £305 towards the provision of a building for the Boys' Institute. By the middle of 1906 it

had purchased a site and had raised about £1,000 towards the cost of a building which was built and opened in 1907.

These opening years of the new century were indeed virile years in the history of the Class. On the other side of its activities it was running a football club with three teams, a rambling club, a tennis club, a hockey team, and a literary and debating society. In 1907, when the Class had 139 members, Mr. George Troup constructed a swimming pool for the Class near the reservoir in Karori, and in 1909 he gave the adjacent land for the present tennis court.

Perhaps the greatest characteristic of the Y.M.B.C. in these years was not so much the fact that no task, however large, appeared to daunt it as the fact of its determination to achieve a thorough and completed job. In 1907, when the Boys' Institute building was opened, it became apparent at once that, to be effective in meeting the demands upon it, the building should have a full-time Secretary. Some £200 would be needed to provide his salary for a year. The Young Men's Bible Class — which had already purchased the site and raised over £1,000 of the cost of the building — took the matter in hand, and within a few weeks, raised not one year's salary, but *three* years' salary.

Membership of the Class remained about 100 until 1910, when a gradual decline set in. In 1915, when Mr. A. Martin took over the leadership, it was 87; in 1917 it still stood at 60 despite 42 members absent in the Forces. By 1918 the Class had 63 of its former members in the Forces, and 50 active members. Only ten of the former members rejoined the Class on leaving the Forces. From 67 members in 1920, the numbers continued to decline until 1924, when the Class had only 43 on the roll. There was then some recovery in numbers, which remained fairly steadily between 50 and 60 until 1936.

There was, however, no decline in spirit accompanying the decline in numbers which had taken place between 1910 and 1920. In 1920 (as today) young men coming to Wellington from homes elsewhere were finding it almost impossible to obtain suitable accommodation. Amongst those badly placed in this respect were a number of the Bible Class lads. The Y.M.B.C. therefore decided to buy a large two-storey house at 306 Willis Street, and to operate it as a Young Men's Memorial Hostel. The property cost some £6,000, of which the Bible Class contributed some £400, and other

members of the congregation some £1,200, the balance being on mortgage. The Hostel would accommodate 40 young men. Mrs. Benn was appointed Matron, and 36 young men took up residence in the Hostel when it was opened in 1920. Until 1928 the Hostel prospered and from its profits, plus various amounts contributed by the Y.M.B.C., the debt on it was reduced to less than £2,000 by that year. Conditions were changing, however. Board had become much easier to obtain in Wellington. In 1929 the Hostel could obtain only 30 boarders — not enough to pay its way. From 1930 to 1937, through the depression years, the position continued to deteriorate. Not only had the number of boarders fallen seriously, there was also the problem of steadily rising maintenance expenditure on an ageing building. In 1937 the decision was taken to sell the Hostel. It was not sold until 1940 when the net proceeds of £1,211 was added to the £1,030 already held for the Y.M.B.C. from the sale of a section earlier given by Sir George and Lady Troup.

In the early 1920's members of the Young Men's Bible Class were visiting the Chinese Church every Sunday evening to teach young Chinese to read and understand the English Bible. The Class was running a Saturday Night Club, a debating society, and various sports activities. In 1924, when its roll was down to 43, its income for the year was £201, of which £154 went to missions, the Hostel and other outside objectives.

In 1923 a Junior Young Men's Bible Class, which had previously been a class within the Sunday School, was taken out of the Sunday School and linked with the Bible Class organisation. The Junior Class then had 21 members. Its numbers reached 36 in 1938, but then fell back to 23.

Mr. W. J. Ferguson became leader of the Young Men's Bible Class in 1928, when it had a membership of between 50 and 60. At this time the Class was still maintaining its sports activities at a high level of prowess and its 1929 report records that its teams had been runners-up in the North Island-South Island indoor sports competition, semi-finalists in the annual seven-a-side football tournament, runners-up in the District Swimming Meeting, and shield winners and Inter-Bible Class Banner winners in athletics.

The Class decided to add a kitchen and social room to the Bible Class room in 1930, and by the middle of the year had

£269 in hand or promised for the purpose. The new amenities were opened in December, 1931. During that year the Class had inaugurated its own after-Church suppers with the object of meeting young men who were strangers to the Church.

In August, 1938, the Young Men's Bible Class celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the co-operative type of Bible Class by the St. John's Class and its leader in 1888. Sir George Troup was himself present to preside over a Jubilee Class of some 180 members and past-members. A brochure on the history of the Class was published, a special Sunday service was held on August 28, and other functions were arranged. To mark this Jubilee, the Class gave the Church the present pulpit fall.

The will of Mrs. Mary Hopkirk, who died in 1939, had made provision for a memorial to her son, a member of St. John's Y.M.B.C., who had been killed in action in the 1914-1918 war. The memorial, which was dedicated on March 31, 1940, took the form of a table, three chairs and a lectern for the Young Men's Bible Class room.

At the outbreak of war in 1939, the Class had a roll of over 50, but by 1941 war was seriously affecting the members. In that year, when Mr. W. Ferguson retired after seventeen years of leadership, there were 37 active members and 21 absent in the Forces. (The Junior Class had shrunk to 8 members.) Membership of the Senior Class continued to decline, and at the end of the war stood at 18. By 1948 the roll had declined to only 13 members, and the Class was at the lowest ebb in its history. Since then the numbers have increased again to 18 in 1953.

THE YOUNG WOMEN'S BIBLE CLASS

THERE IS EVEN LESS INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORIGIN AND earliest days of the Young Women's Bible Class in St. John's than there is concerning the Young Men's Class. Both Classes were Sunday afternoon classes originally within the organisation of the Sunday School, but nevertheless with clearly established identities. They were not included in the annual report of the Sunday School but were separately mentioned in the report of the Kirk Session. There we find reference in the 1878 Report to two Bible Classes, one of which was a senior girls' Class

conducted by Miss McEachern. This Class had apparently been in existence for some years then. The 1885 Report refers to "the Young Women's Bible Class" then being taught by Mrs. Lennox. From the 1890 Report we learn that there is also a Young Women's Bible Class at Mt. Cook under Miss Hamilton. This Mount Cook Class continued until 1912, after which it was merged into the Willis Street Class. Statistically, the two Classes were treated as one. In 1897, the first year for which figures are available, there were 58 girls in the two Classes.

The Young Women's Bible Class has officially adopted 1892 as the year of its birth, although the above references show that there was a Y.W.B.C. in St. John's long before that date. The 1891 Annual Report of the Session states: "Bible Classes for senior scholars are conducted in both Sunday Schools: by Mr. Troup and Mrs. Lennox at the Willis Street School and by Mr. Aitken and Miss Hamilton at the Mount Cook School." There is no mention of any of these Classes in the Sunday School Report for the same year. The Session Report for 1892 says: "Special efforts are made through the Bible Classes to keep hold of the senior scholars to retain them in connection with the Sunday School, and to introduce them into the full membership of the Church. Advanced Classes are taught in separate classrooms by Mr. Troup, Mrs. Lennox and Miss Troup at St. John's, and by Messrs. Aitken and Reith at Mount Cook School." On October 9, 1892, Miss Troup reorganised and became leader of the Y.W.B.C. as we know it today. She adopted the same co-operative plan as for the Young Men's Class and carried on the work for the next six years.

In 1900 the Y.W.B.C. had another change of leadership when Miss Glasgow resigned after two years and Miss Lorimer took her place. The Mount Cook Young Women's Class was at this time under the leadership of Mr. H. W. Kersley. Miss Lorimer was succeeded by Mr. J. Boal as leader in December, 1901.

In 1903 the Willis Street Class began to edit a quarterly magazine, *The Girls' Chronicle*, designed to stimulate interest in the Young Women's Bible Class Movement throughout New Zealand. A year later the circulation of this magazine had reached 1,000 and in 1905 it reached 1,500.

The Y.W.B.C. had a separate section of the Church Annual Report to itself for the first time in 1904 and this is the first

occasion on which we have any broad picture of the Class as it met in these early years of the present century. The combined roll (including the Mount Cook Class) stood at 89 and the average attendance was 65. The girls contributed papers and took part in discussions on the same co-operative basis as the Young Men's Class. On its other activities the Class said of itself: "The advantages of this institution are not limited to the meetings on Sunday afternoon. The Class affords opportunities of social intercourse invaluable to its members, many of whom are strangers in Wellington." In 1904 the Class contributed £52 to missions and in addition disposed of Indian goods to the value of £50 on behalf of the Mukhti Mission. Interest in this Mission for outcast children of India was stimulated by a visit to New Zealand in February, 1903, of Pandita Ramabai's daughter, Manoramabai, who when she spoke to St. John's Y.W.B.C. presented to the Class from her mother a portrait in oils of the Pandita as an expression of appreciation for the efforts of the Class on behalf of their work. Nearly forty years later the Class was again visited by a member of the Ramabai Mukhti Mission, Krishnabai Gadre. The portrait is still a treasured possession of the Class.

The 1904 Report records the important statement that "largely through the influence of this Class a Union of the Presbyterian Young Women's Bible Classes of the colony had been recently formed." The Y.W.B.C. of St. John's, like the Young Men's Class, was New Zealand's spearhead in Bible Class progress.

The combined Willis Street-Mount Cook roll continued to increase during these years from 94 in 1905 to 134 in 1908 and 171 in 1910. In 1912 there were 145 members, of whom 95 were in the Willis Street Class. In that same year the Willis Street Y.W.B.C. bought a piano and presented it to the Victoria Ward at the public Hospital.

In 1913, with the addition of the girls from Mount Cook, the roll of the Willis Street Class stood at 130. The number was uncomfortably large for a single Class and so two classes were formed, a Number one Class with 90 girls and a Number Two Class with 40 girls. These two Classes continued until 1916 when, with the total membership down to 97, they were merged

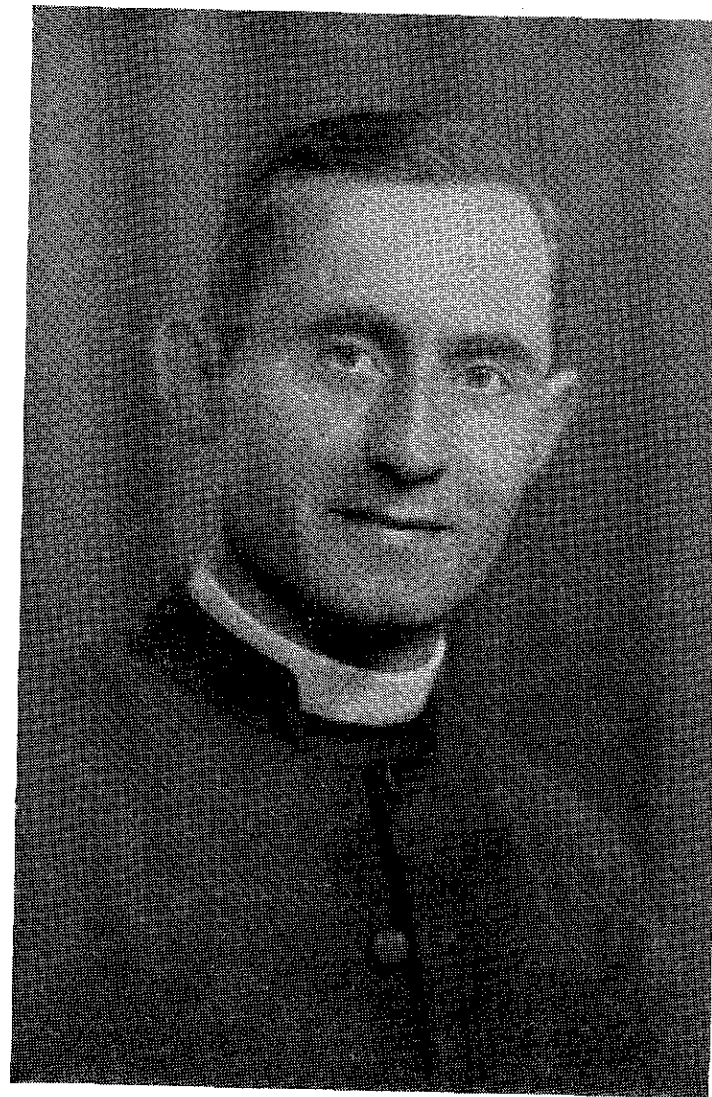
back into one Class. It was about this time that the Class began conducting a service once a month at the Ohiro Home.

In its earliest separate report the Class had referred to the number of its members who were strangers to Wellington. This has always been a feature of the Class, and the coming and going of students and teachers in training has considerably affected its membership. Between 1918 and 1919 the numbers dropped to 57, largely it seems as a consequence of the end of the war and the reduced number of girls from outside Wellington. In 1925 the same thing happened again, when there was an exodus of 24 of its members who left Wellington to take up teaching posts in other districts. In that year the roll fell to 35.

In 1923 Mr. J. Boal resigned after leading the Class for twenty years and was succeeded by Miss Mary Chappell. In that same year the Girls' Junior Bible Class, with a membership of 29, was separated from the Sunday School and linked in with the Y.W.B.C. Membership gradually climbed again, reaching 53 in 1933; 60 in 1937; and 69 in 1940. In 1935 Miss Chappell resigned the leadership and for two years Miss H. D. Clyde, who had been sub-leader for the previous nine years, filled the position. In 1937 she relinquished it to Miss Pearl Brodie, who still leads the Class.

Throughout its many years of activity the Class has maintained a variety of interests outside the Sunday meetings. In community service it has ever taken its share of responsibility in such spheres as the Missions to Seamen and the British Sailors' Society, the Ohiro Home, and the Girls' Borstal. During the depression years from 1932 up to the Second World War it interested itself in the well-being of several families in need of assistance, keeping up a regular supply of groceries, fruit, vegetables and clothing. During the war too it sent parcels to our own St. John's boys on active service and, since the war, continues to send parcels to a refugee settlement in West Germany.

Within the Church activities the members have supported the cause of Missions, Orphanages, Deaconesses, Maori Girls' Hostel, the Choir, Busy Bees and Girls' Life Brigade and supplied leaders for other Classes and teachers for the Sunday School. From its ranks have been appointed Presidents and Secretaries of the N.Z.Y.W.B.C. Union and of Wellington District Committee. In the Youth for Youth Campaign of 1932, the B.C. Forward



Rev. W. P. Temple

Movement of 1947, and the New Life Movement of today the members have given enthusiastic support to the best of their ability.

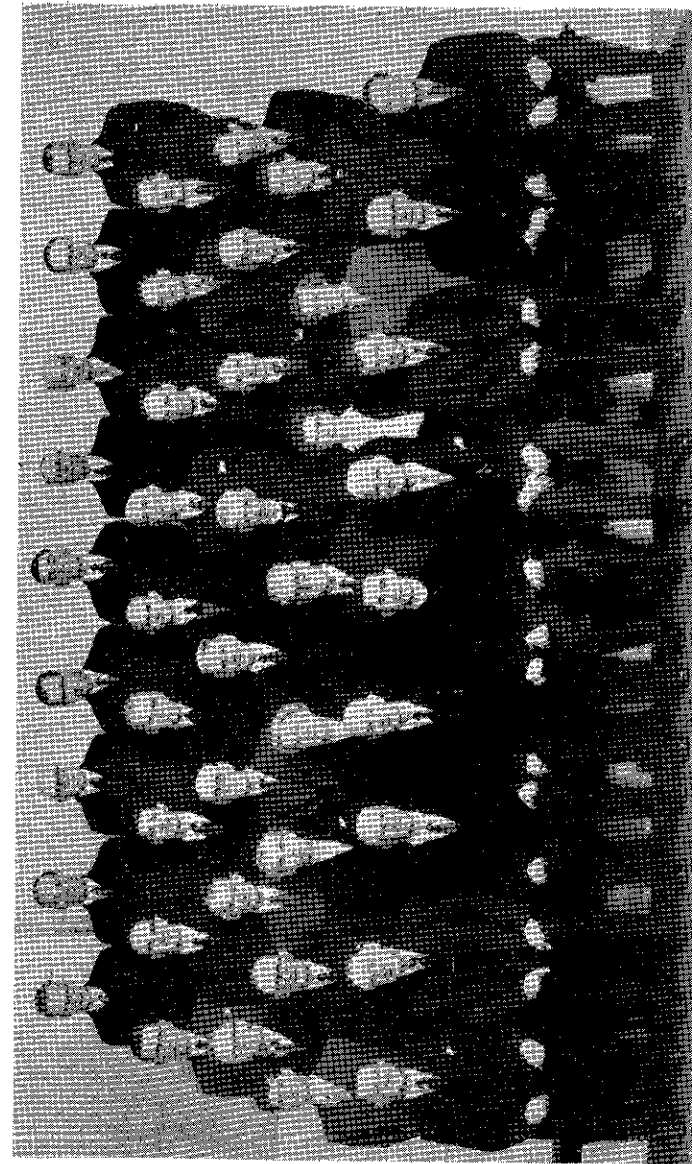
As the Y.W.B.C. has always stood for the Foursquare Life, the physical and cultural aspects have not been overlooked. From earliest times provision has been made for sports Clubs and Social Clubs. Hockey, basketball, gymnastics, cricket, badminton and tennis have all had their supporters. A life member of the Tennis Club, Miss Helen Clyde, on her retirement in 1939 presented to the Club for Championship Mixed Doubles a silver cup with two miniatures. Rambles, picnics, Class teas, socials and debating societies have been enjoyed in conjunction with the Y.M.B.C. The Here-we-are Club which started in 1928 met at the homes of the various members and did much to foster the spirit of fellowship and joyousness which has always been a feature of the Class. Journal Sunday, instituted by Mr. Boal, kept alive the history of the Class in mood grave and gay.

Successes through the years have come to the Class in the Inter Bible Class Competitions which were started in the early 1920's.

A significant change in the time of meeting took place in 1945. By that time the Class was a much younger group than formerly and the decision was made to meet on Sunday mornings at 9.30 before the Church Service instead of on Sunday afternoons from 2.45 p.m. to 4 p.m.

In 1937 Misses Chappell, Clyde and Millar, who as leaders and Secretary had for many years sat together at the classroom table, presented a new oak table. In 1942 the members in that year gave a new leader's chair to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Class, and in addition donations were made by past and present members to mark the Jubilee by a gift to the Church.

In 1939 it started a Class Extension Fund with the object of acquiring a Fellowship Room for the use of members for study and recreation. This original plan was changed later to a scheme for renovating the existing classroom (on the top floor of the Sunday School building). By 1952 over £300 had been accumulated and the work was set in hand and completed. In the years immediately following the war membership declined



OFFICE-BEARERS — NOVEMBER, 1953
Front row: L. R. Blake (Elder), R. Fleming (Manager), J. A. Orr (E., Asst. Session Clerk and Board Secretary), A. Martin (E.), Rev. W. P. Temple, Ad. Howitt (E.), N. G. Robertson (M., Treasurer), P. H. Anderson (E.), I. S. Lowman (M.).
2nd row: R. Dunn (M.), E. Darroch (E.), Miss E. M. Brodie (M.), Mrs. A. Harvie (M.), R. Johnston (M.), Miss H. D. Clyde (M.).
3rd row: R. B. Fowler (E.), A. G. Louden (E.), J. S. Lomas (E.), H. Glover (E.), J. Hunter (M.), D. MacLeod (E.), A. H. Wallace (E.), H. S. Gray (M.).
4th row: H. B. Smith (E.), F. A. Strong (E.), D. J. Bridge (M.), J. C. Smith (E.), N. S. Woods (E.), W. Reid (M.), F. C. Spratt (E.), J. H. Long (M.), C. Yennal (E.).
Back row: G. Simpson (M.), J. S. Cole (M.), J. B. L. Cook (E.), D. C. E. Blake (E.), J. S. Martin (E.), R. E. Pumfrey (E.), W. Duthie (E.), T. Page (M.), Dr. T. F. Corkill (E.).
Absent: Elders—Dr. H. B. Even (Session Clerk), H. Stockbridge, Hon. J. R. Marshall, D. Ritchie. MANAGERS—R. G. Dell, G. H. Scott, I. D. Stevenson, E. Smith, F. C. Wade, A. L. Wall, Mrs. Gladstone Hughes.

to as low as 12 in 1950, but by 1952 it had recovered to 25 and at present stands at 24.

NEW ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

THE STORY OF ST. JOHN'S THROUGHOUT ITS FIRST CENTURY has many times been the story of experiment—of groups suddenly forming to reach into new activities and after new objectives. Sometimes the experiment has moved into something more permanent; sometimes, even though itself short-lived, it has launched something else of greater and more lasting importance than itself. In the pages that have already been written this continually returning springtime in Church activities is evident and the years at the close of the century are no exception to this perpetual recrudescence of new life.

The Men's Club originated in 1942 out of meetings of men of the congregation convened by the Minister to consider the challenge presented by the Campaign for Christian Order. The first meetings were held in James Smith's lounge in 1942 when a small, but steadily growing, group of men of the congregation had tea together once a month followed by discussion. The first President of the new Club was Mr. W. A. Armour. In 1943 the place of the meeting was changed to what was then known as the Basement Parlour (now the Fellowship Room) where some 40 men of the congregation had tea together on the third Tuesday of each month followed by addresses and discussions until 7.30 p.m. While many men contributed to this growing fellowship, it derived its chief momentum from the Rev. P. Gladstone Hughes with his kindly personality and his capacity to draw men together and enlist their loyalty.

It was not long before the Men's Club found that fellowship and service go together. By June, 1944, it had, by the efforts of its members, transformed the Basement Parlour into the present Fellowship Room. Mr. A. P. Smith, a member of the Club, gave the carpet and the Women's Association presented the curtains. In the following two years the Club renovated the kitchen and installed the service lift to the hall. By 1947 its membership had risen to 65 and reached a peak of 66 the following year.

In 1949 the Club reached a decision to embark upon its largest work—the re-designing of the stage in the main hall,

provision of footlights, spotlights, curtains and other equipment, and the building of a projection box and installation of amplifying equipment. The task was indeed a big one for voluntary effort but was completed by the end of 1951.

Having achieved this work, the Men's Club (momentarily at least) lost its momentum. In 1951 and 1952 its attendances dwindled and in 1953 it abandoned its regular monthly meetings in favour of an occasional gathering together of men of the congregation.

Whether it revives or not, however, the Men's Club in its renovation first of the Fellowship Room and then of the hall created an inheritance which has had important effects. Various individuals and groups became aware of new potentialities. In April, 1951, an Adult Cabinet (comprising representatives from Session, Managers, Women's Association, Men's Club, Choir and Evening Guild) held its first meeting with the object of linking the organisations and jointly studying ways of extending fellowship throughout the whole congregation.

This Adult Cabinet launched two new congregational enterprises, the Drama Group, with its regular readings and periodic stage productions in the hall, and "Saturday Night at Eight", the latter being a monthly evening programme and supper in the hall for old people, shut-in people, lonely people, and in fact anyone who might like to accept the friendly invitation. Both the Drama Group and "Saturday Night at Eight" continue to flourish. Both have been greatly helped and stimulated by the new facilities in the hall.

Adult Cabinet, amongst other things, launched the idea of a Centennial Fair to raise funds to re-seat the hall and provide money for other Centennial purposes. This Fair was successfully held during this year.

In 1950 Mr. Temple introduced his "Wednesday Lectures" as a winter series of weekly evening talks on our faith and doctrine. He has continued the series each winter and the lectures have attracted many Christian folk from outside St. John's as well as members of the congregation.

Amongst the young people of St. John's a new development of recent years has been the introduction first of the Girls' Life Brigade and Cadets and then of the Boys' Brigade and Life Boys.

The Girls' Life Brigade was introduced in 1947 mainly on the initiative of Sister Nessie Morgan, Miss Mills and Miss Fullarton who, following up a suggestion by the Rev. P. Gladstone Hughes, interested a number of the senior Sunday School girls in the possibility of forming a Company. The 8th Wellington Girls' Life Brigade Company (i.e., The St. John's Company) commenced in July, 1947, with Miss J. W. Fullarton as Captain and with 14 girls enrolled, meetings being held each Wednesday evening from 6 to 7.30. Membership increased rapidly and in March, 1949, a Cadet Section for girls 6 to 10 years was formed under Miss J. Cunliffe. Sixteen girls were enrolled in the Cadets that year as well as the thirty then in the Brigade. In this present year the roll has stood at 33 in the Girls' Life Brigade Company and 28 in the Cadets.

In 1948 the suggestion that a Boys' Brigade Company be formed in St. John's was taken up by the leader of the Junior Young Men's Bible Class. Youth Cabinet supported it and the idea was followed through until in May, 1949, the 2nd Wellington Company of the Boys' Brigade was formed in St. John's under the captaincy at first of Mr. Duncan Fowler and latterly of Mr. Eddie Smith. Thirteen boys paraded on the first night and the numbers soon increased to over twenty and have held at round about that mark. At the Waipara Jubilee Camp of the Boys' Brigade in the summer of 1950-51 (the largest gathering of the B.B. ever held outside the British Isles) the 2nd Wellington (St. John's) Company had twenty boys and two officers present. In May, 1950, a Life Boy Team was formed for younger boys under the leadership of Mrs. D. J. Bridge. In 1951 this team had as many as 35 boys on its roll. More recently Mr. R. G. Dell has taken over the leadership. This year there are 18 boys in the B.B. Company and 16 in the Life Boys.

THE WELLINGTON BOYS' INSTITUTE

IN THE EARLY 1880's THE HON. J. G. W. AITKEN AND MR. William Allen began the "Lads' Mission" at Mount Cook on Sunday evenings. By 1891 this work had developed to the extent that it was decided to build a hall as a centre for its continuance. On April 9, 1891, a circular letter appealing for funds for this "proposed Boys' Institute" was issued over the signatures of nine St. John's men (Messrs. J. G. W. Aitken, W. Allen, F. H.

Fraser, G. A. Troup, A. Johnston, W. Hopkirk, Ad. Howitt, E. J. Graham, and R. Hopkirk) and two men from outside St. John's — Messrs. J. W. Gibson and S. G. Martin. In 1893 a hall was built in Wakefield Street and the Lads' Mission became the Boys' Institute.

Until 1899 it continued to be run by Mr. J. G. W. Aitken, assisted by various St. John's men. In that year, however, Mr. Aitken asked Mr. George Troup, leader of the Y.M.B.C., if his class would take over the running of the Institute services and the Class agreed to do so. In 1902 the Institute building in Wakefield Street was requisitioned by the City Council and the Y.M.B.C. from their own revenues hired a school in Tory Street. The work continued to be carried on here until 1906, but it was becoming increasingly evident that the Boys' Institute needed a hall of its own suitable to its requirements and available on week nights.

The Y.M.B.C. had already subscribed a sum of £206 from amongst themselves for a mission hall when Mr. George Troup appealed to them for the money necessary to purchase a Boys' Institute site — approximately £400. They put in their mission hall savings plus £208 provided by members the night the appeal was made to them. (One member is known to have contributed £50 — the whole of his savings — and no doubt some others did likewise.) A site was purchased in Arthur Street. The Board of Managers being unable to finance the building of the Institute, the Y.M.B.C. launched a public appeal for the money and secured £1,000 from the citizens of Wellington, £300 from members of St. John's congregation and a further £100 from their own members. With this money a building was erected and opened in 1907. In recognition of the support given by the city the name was changed from "St. John's Boys' Institute" to "Wellington Boys' Institute".

In the story of the Y.M.B.C. we have already described how the Class, seeing the need for a full-time secretary for the Institute, immediately took up the work of collecting for this object and securing enough to guarantee a salary of £200 for three years.

The new building, small though it was, gave a great impetus to the activities of the Institute and by 1909 the building was taxed to its utmost capacity and a house on the adjoining section was bought. In the following year Mrs. S. A. Rhodes became

interested in the work of the Institute. In that year she gave £100 towards it, followed almost immediately by the gift of a valuable site in Tasman Street and a further £2,000 towards a building to be erected on that site to provide board for working boys as well as the other activities of the Institute. These gifts by Mrs. Rhodes enabled a larger scheme to be grasped and in 1911 an appeal to the public was made by Mr. Troup which brought in another £4,342 in direct giving and £2,500 from a Pageant at Newtown Park and a Bazaar in the Town Hall.

By 1914, with £14,000 available, it was possible to commence the erection of the present building in Tasman Street. It was opened on February 9, 1916, by the Prime Minister, the Hon. W. F. Massey. The new building, in addition to rooms for social and general activities, accommodated thirty-one boarders. It included a swimming bath, games room, gymnasium, library and reading room. The building was further extended in 1927 and a carpentry workshop (the gift of Lady Bell) was added in 1932.

The Wellington Boys' Institute had passed out of the direct control of the St. John's Y.M.B.C. in 1907 to a broader-based Committee on which St. John's nevertheless was represented by its Minister (as Honorary President), Mr. George Troup (as President), the Session Clerk, the Secretary of the Board of Managers and four representatives from the Y.M.B.C. In 1926 the Constitution of the Institute was again altered, St. John's Session, Managers and Y.M.B.C. having seven members on the Management Committee.

Today the Wellington Boys' Institute and S. A. Rhodes' Home for Boys (Incorporated) — to give it its full title — is stated to be the largest Boys' Club with boarding hostel attached in either New Zealand or Australia.

EPHLOGUE

WE HAVE RECORDED OUR OWN STORY MOVING THROUGH A HUNDRED years. It is but a chapter in a story that runs through nineteen hundred years and more — the story of countless men, women and children who in the love of Jesus Christ have given themselves to the work of His Church under the Will of our Father in Heaven.

As we come to the end of our own first century and look back on their works, we cannot but feel within ourselves a profound thanksgiving to God for their labours and our inheritance. May we prove worthy in the time ahead.

"Let Thy servants see Thee at Thy saving work, and let their children see Thy glorious power.

Lord, may Thy loving favour rest on us, and prosper all the work we undertake."

—Psalm 90:16-17 (Moffatt).

OFFICERS OF ST JOHN'S CHURCH,
WELLINGTON
NOVEMBER, 1953

Minister: REV. WILLIAM P. TEMPLE, M.A., B.D.

Deaconess: SISTER NESSIE MORGAN.

Organist and Choirmaster: MR. STUART CANON.

Session Clerk: DR. H. B. EWEN.

Asst. Session Clerk and Board Secretary: MR. JOHN A. C.

Church Treasurer: MR. N. G. ROBERTSON.

Sunday School Superintendent: MR. R. B. FOWLER.

P.W.M.U. and Guild President: MRS. GLADSTONE HUGHES.

Evening Guild Active President: MRS. E. THOMSON.

Senior Y.M.B.C. Leader: MR. H. S. GRAY.

Intermediate Y.M.B.C. Leader: MR. T. PAGE.

Junior Y.M.B.C. Leader: MR. R. G. DELL.

Senior Y.W.B.C. Leader: MISS E. M. BRODIE.

Intermediate Y.W.B.C. Leader: MISS K. M. GRANT.

Boys' Brigade Captain: MR. F. SMITH.

Life Boy Team Leader: MR. R. G. DELL.

Girls' Life Brigade Captain: MISS J. W. FULLARTON.

Cadet Leader: MISS J. CUNLIFFE.

Drama Group President: MR. D. J. BRIDGE.

Men's Club President: MR. D. C. BLAKE.

St. John's "Messenger" Editor: MR. N. S. WOODS.

Church Officer: MR. ROBERT KELLY.

(Names of Elders and Managers appear below the photograph.)