

ALFORD METHODIST CHURCH JUBILEE.

A BRIEF HISTORY.

The initial steps towards the erection of a Wesleyan Church at Alford, were taken in 1883, when a meeting of persons interested was held at the residence of Mr G. Bruce, those present including the chairman (Rev. C. T. Newman), and Messrs R. Heath, G. Bruce, G. Heath, Jas. Butler, D. Butler, Prouse, Smith, R. Chappell and Groase. The matter was discussed at length, and finally, on the motion of Messrs R. Heath and Butler, it was resolved "That it is desirable to take immediate steps for the erection of a Wesleyan Church at Alford, and that the chairman take the necessary steps to complete the purchase from Mr F. W. Gurner of allotment 73, previously bought for the church.

The following were nominated as trustees:—Messrs R. A. Heath, Jas. Butler, S. R. Smith, Richd. Chappell, Wm. Beer, D. Edyvean, Geo. Heath, G. Bruce, with the chairman (as supt. of the district) and the president of the conference.

The chairman (Rev. Newman) offered the whole of the materials (except the stone) with furniture and other fittings, all in good order, for £95, and the offer was accepted subject to the approval of Messrs R. Heath and Jas. Buter.

Stone, lime and sand were to be supplied by donation, and the trustees and others made themselves responsible, while Messrs R. and G. Heath promised to do the plastering free of cost. Plans and specifications were drawn up by the chairman and Mr R. Heath, and tenders called for the labor only. The meeting also resolved that the foundation stone be laid by Captain Thos. Anthony, and that ex-Mayor John J. Christmas (Kadina) be asked to take the chair at a public meeting.

These functions were duly held, and at a trustee meeting, on October 13, 1883, the building committee was able to report that the building was progressing favorably, and that the work under the contract was nearly completed. Mr Beer engaged to procure the sand, and Messrs G. Bruce and Butler to burn the lime. It was also decided that the opening service take place on November 11, to be followed

decided that the opening service take place on November 11, to be followed by a tea meeting on the Wednesday. The Mayor of Kadina (Mr Jas. Martin) presided at the public meeting, which was of an enthusiastic character. The superintendent (Rev. Newman) conducted the services afternoon and evening.

The church material and fittings had been purchased from Newtown at a cost of £95, labor and material donated came to £61, land and transfer £9 12/, contractor Jenkins £54, and extras to a little over £10, a total of £230 5/. Against this, there was a loan of £87 10/ from Jenkins, £10 10/ from the loan fund, and £46 proceeds of stone laying and opening of the building, with £61 labor donated, a total of £204 18/. The deficiency was more than covered by promised donations of £30. Sittings were let at 1/6, and Mr Geo. Heath was appointed the first church steward. Mr Heath, who was one of the chief mainstays of the church, held at various times the positions of superintendent of the Sunday school, trustee, secretary and treasurer of the church trust. A useful life came to an end, and a lovable personality passed away, in 1921.

With the completion of the church, the community had an asset, and at the request of the Government of the day, the church was let for school purposes on quarterly payment of 10/ per annum for each child up to 24. This was in 1884. Rev. William Reed was chairman at this stage, and a move was made to establish an organ fund; an instrument was procured from Mr Glasson, and a choir came into existence.

Throughout the ensuing years the following names were prominent in church matters—Rev. I. Perry, Sidney Edyvean, Rev. W. Reed, Beare, Rev. Tassie, Blackney, J. Mitchell, W. Symons, Rev. Allen, Rev. Robt. Kelly, Richd. Chappell, R. and G. Heath, G. Bruce, Jas. and D. Butler, T. S. Peters, and many others.

In August, 1896, the matter of union with the Methodist churches was discussed by the trustees, and it was carried by six votes (one being neutral) that the trustees were in favor of the proposal. Renovation of the church building was also undertaken. Well known names come in at this juncture, viz., Rev. P. C. Thomas (1899), Peter Allen (who gave a lecture), Rev. A. N. Smith (1903), W. Peters, Rev. S. Rossiter, Rev. A. Moyle (1912), W. T. Correll, F. H. Pearce, C. L. Bruce, J. Spackman, J. Harris, Rev. A. Morris, H. Bruce, Rev. S. Forsyth (1913) when the division of the circuit took place, and the Rev. Milton Treason. Collectors were ap-

of the circuit took place, and the Rev. Milton Tresise. Collectors were appointed in 1917 for the raising of funds to purchase an 18-stop Cornish organ; and so the work and activities of the church went on. Anniversaries and tea meetings alternated with harvest thanksgivings, and the Alford church has maintained its fine influence in the little town and district to the present day.