

CALEN TOWNSHIP.

CENTRE OF RAPIDLY EXTENDING
CANE AREA.

WILLIAM PRATT MEMORIAL
CHURCH.

Less than ten years ago the large area of country drained by St. Helens Creek was very sparsely inhabited. A few selectors occupied isolated portions, the remainder was a cattle run. The North Coast railway has entirely changed the outlook. Thousands of tons of cane are now sent away annually to the mills, cane farms are visible on both sides of the railway, and one hesitates to predict what possibilities are ahead when Cameron's Pocket and Barron Pocket, to the west, and the coastal country to the sea, are fully developed.

The pioneer of this new order of things was Mr. William Pratt. He had the vision to see what was likely to follow when the country was rendered accessible by a railway, and being a man of action he secured a large freehold property along the creek and lost no time in putting one hundred acres under cane. His enterprise was rewarded in the profitable subdivision of the block, by sale and lease, and had he lived the investment would have made him a wealthy man. His family, however, will reap the reward that was denied him.

Calen, on the northern bank of the creek, became the railway centre, and from this point a township is gradually growing. Already several shops and public institutions are to be seen, where all the conveniences of a settlement are provided, and what is a rare event, a first-class road will shortly afford easy access from the western end to this young and thriving centre.

It is surprising to see the canefields that are already dotted around containing a cane supply that already is a factor to be considered in the successful continuance of one or more of the local mills, while a cursory inspection confirms the statement, oft repeated, that within a few years enough cane will be grown to fully supply what would have been a good-sized mill a few years ago. Fortunately the day of small mills has gone and new areas brought under cane are serving the more useful purpose of enabling existing mills to increase their capacity and usefulness. The present is an interesting time to take a run through cane country, for on road and in field a scene of activ-

take a run through cane country, for on road and in field a scene of activity is witnessed that acts like a tonic in this period of depression providing also food for reflection as to what would be the prospect if a more certain market for sugar existed or the manufacture of by-products opened up new sources for the absorption of cane. Despite the clouds on the horizon, farmers, cutters, and carters exhibit a cheerful exterior thankful that a return to each is in sight after a waiting period of nearly 12 months. In every paddock one meets scenes that are more or less animated.

To the tune of falling cane,
Men hum a fav'rite rhyme;
Troublous housewives and embargo,
Are forgotten for the time.

The trucks are fully loaded,
Cane knives are flashing bright,
The weight is up to standard,
The c.c.s. is right.

The untimely death of Mr. Pratt was looked upon as a great loss to Calen in particular, and to the whole of the northern end, where new settlement was taking place. He became a representative on the Shire Council, a director of Farleigh mill, and an adviser to all and sundry. His knowledge of growing and milling sugar cane was sound, and as he had a robust faith in the future of St. Helens, he devoted his activities to opening the country with roads and encouraging those who preferred other occupation to canegrowing, to turn their attention to dairying. With others he explored the country as far as the O'Connell River for dairying land. Last year when it was felt the time had come to erect a church at Calen it was suggested that this would be a permanent and fitting memorial to one who had given valuable service to others. The suggestion caught public imagination, more so when it became associated as a combined Presbyterian and Methodist movement. A joint committee worked out all the details, Messrs. R. and J. M'Intyre, farmers, gave the movement a big push forward by presenting an allotment in a central portion of the township, and financial help on a generous scale combined to enable tenders to be called. Mr. A. McDonald was entrusted with the erection of a structure on a plan he had prepared, and on Saturday last an attractive building was formally handed over and dedicated to the worship of God. The building will seat about 200 people comfortably, which is more than adequate for present needs and should meet the requirements of Calen

for present needs and should meet the requirements of Calen for some years. In the designing Mr. M'Donald has made full provision for the summer months by allowing plenty of window space; lining the roof with tented building board is a further improvement, as the material possesses special acoustic and insulating properties. The building is 30ft. x 23ft. in the main section with a porch 8ft. x 7ft. At the entrance, on each side, lead light memorial windows, the gift of Mr. M'Donald, have been inserted, bearing the inscription "Wm. Pratt Memorial." The structure presents a very attractive appearance eminently suited to the purpose to which it will be devoted.

Dedication Ceremony.

The official dedication took place on Saturday afternoon, when a congregation estimated at over 300 people, representative of all parts of the surrounding district, including about 60 from Mackay, assembled at the church shortly before 4 o'clock.

Addressing the gathering Mr. N. Manning, representing the local committee, said it was with sadness as well as pleasure they assembled that afternoon, sad at the thought that they had lost a guide and friend in the person in whose honor the church had been erected, whose counsel no one on the creek sought in vain, and pleased at the fact that they had made this practical contribution towards the spiritual welfare of the community. He called upon Mr. A. M'Donald, the architect and builder, to hand over the building.

In formally handing over the key of the structure to Rev. R. Bardon, B.A., minister of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Mackay, Mr. M'Donald remarked that he was proud of his association with the erection of the church, and it gave him greater pleasure to have constructed that building than any other. He paid a tri-

bute to the worth and work of the late Wm. Pratt.

Rev. R. Bardon associated the Rev. F. J. Harris, of Mackay Methodist Church, with his remarks of appreciation at the provision of a place of public worship in Calen, and trusted it would be a real benefit to the community. He then handed over the key to Rev. A. Asboe, Moderator of the Townsville Presbytery, with a request that he should declare the building open.

Rev. A. Asboe referred briefly to the value of a church in the life of a community and the satisfaction that was felt in having accomplished this desirable undertaking and the extension of church work at Calen. He added it was also pleasing to record that in this work they were united

added it was also pleasing to record that in this work they were united with their Methodist brethren. At the conclusion of his remarks he unlocked the doors and the congregation filed into the pews, overcrowding the structure to such an extent that not even standing room remained. Many had to be content with standing room in the porch.

After the opening devotions, Rev. R. Bardon called upon Mrs. D. Pratt to present a Bible for the Pulpit.

Mrs. Pratt said she had been requested by Rev. James Gibson, of Brisbane, to present the Bible, and she did so with pleasure. She also wished to thank all those who had assisted towards the erection of the church in memory of her son, and for their presence that afternoon.

At a later stage Rev. A. Asboe, while the congregation stood, solemnly dedicated the Church, and the following articles donated for use during church services. The names of the donors appear in brackets:—Pulpit (Rev. T. Bainbridge), organ (Mrs. W. Duff, Pindi Pindi), forms (Mr. F. Pratt), chairs (Mr. D. Pratt), Bible (Rev. James Gibson, Brisbane), memorial windows (Mr. A. M'Donald), table (Mrs. C. Mau), table-cloth (Miss Pratt), lamps (Mesdames Petersen and Robertson), hymn books (Mr. Dingwall), vase (Mrs. Johnson, collection plates (Mr. N. Manning).

The occasional sermon was preached by Rev. F. J. Harris, who, in the course of an inspiring address, referred to the necessity for regular church attendance if they desired to develop the spiritual welfare of the community, as they hoped would be done. The lessons were read by Messrs. F. Linnett and W. M'Dougall.

The service concluded with the Benediction.

Before departing for their homes those present were provided with refreshments kindly and most liberally provided by the committee. The collection at the door amounted to over £18. Contributions to the building fund to date amount to £380, which leaves only £100 to raise to entirely liquidate the debt on the church property. Services will now be regularly conducted alternately by the Presbyterian and Methodist church representatives. The first regular service was held on Sunday afternoon, Mr. W. M'Dougall officiating. Several baptisms followed this service.