

BRITISH WOMEN'S CLUB

New Organisation Formed In Hastings

DOMINION SPECIAL SERVICE

HASTINGS, April 5.

At an enthusiastic meeting of upwards of 200 women, ranging in age from 18 to 80 and including brides of men of both wars, a British Women's Club was formed at Hastings this afternoon. The attendance exceeded all expectations, and the Borough Council Chambers were filled with British women anxious to form their own organisation. It was decided that women of the British Dominions also will be admitted to the club.

"An organisation of this kind can do nothing but good," said the mayor, Mr. A. I. Rainbow, who presided. "I am well aware of the movement that has preceded this meeting, and the attendance fully illustrates the interest in such an organisation. Although women will belong to an organisation of this kind, they will still be most loyal New Zealanders, and I have no doubt that this club will strengthen the links of empire and cement the ties which already bind us firmly to the old country."

Extending a welcome to recently arrived British brides, Mr. Rainbow said that everyone knew just how lonely these girls could be in a strange land. He was certain that this was a move in the right direction, and he wished it every success.

Mrs. Malcolm Mason, an originator of the plan for a British women's club, described how she had struck up a friendship with a young English bride in a bus. "She was very good to look at, very charming, and very brave," said Mrs. Mason. She had married her husband in Britain, and had come to New Zealand to await his return. She had had but three days with him before he was sent overseas again. The vision of that girl, with a young baby among strangers in a strange land, prompted her to form some such club as this.

"The club should stand for better understanding between girls who have recently come out and their new country," continued Mrs. Mason. "After the last war it wasn't so easy and people were a little apathetic, but let us make it easier for the young people from this war. They have fallen in love with their husbands, and have been willing to follow them to a strange land, but they haven't yet fallen in love with the country. That is where it is up to us older people."

The following pro tem committee was elected: Secretary, Miss M. S. Silvester; treasurer, Mrs. D. H. Stewart; executive, Mesdames L. Mackersey, A. Reeve, and Malcolm Mason.

Mrs. E. Wall assured the meeting of the warm support of the Hastings Townswomen's Guild, and Mrs. D. H. Stewart similarly spoke on behalf of the women's division of the Farmers' Union.

Enthusiastic Support Accorded Formation Of British Women's Club

An enthusiastic meeting of approximately 200 women, in the Borough Council Chambers yesterday afternoon, showed spontaneous interest in the preliminary discussion on the formation of a club in Hastings, for women of Britain and the overseas Dominions, to be known as the British Women's Club.

The mayor, Mr A. I. Rainbow, who presided, wished the new club every success and acknowledged the foresight of those who had thought out and developed the idea. It was an essential step in the right direction and an association of this sort could do nothing but good, he said. It was an extremely bad day for the Empire and this country when people could not meet in a strange country and still be good New Zealanders, and it was all the more essential that this club should come into being now, as, apart from the young brides and mothers already here, to whom New Zealand offered a hearty welcome, there was likely to be an influx into New Zealand of people from Great Britain, who would be strangers.

The formation of a small interim committee, whose actions were subject to confirmation or amendment at a future date, was suggested by the mayor.

"That something like this is needed is shown by the wonderful response," said Mrs Malcolm Mason, Waimarama, who convened the meeting.

Explaining her reason for writing the original letter to the Press, concerning the formation of the proposed club, Mrs Mason said she was prompted to do so through a chance encounter with a young and brave English woman, who had married a New Zealander and with her small daughter had come out to her husband's country. After only three days together the husband was sent back on overseas service and she was left without a friend in New Zealand, and "there were probably many other similar lonely girls," she added.

"We should be a club of friendliness, by meeting the young people coming out so bravely and introducing them to other clubs," Mrs Mason continued. Other suggested activities were that every British person arriving in New Zealand be met by a member of the club in that district; help in the manner of shopping, so different in the two countries; pointing out the benefits of the Plunket Society to young mothers; and assisting with artistic, musical and dramatic interests.

"The club should be kept a social one, to gather for afternoon-tea and a talk. Let us keep it together, for unity is strength, but not to shut out the interests of the community," Mrs Mason went on. "I hope that whatever the club turns out to be it will help the younger women especially, teaching them to appreciate our little country and make them splendid New Zealanders, never forgetting, however, that they are British-born."

A provisional committee, to draw up rules and regulations and arrange for the next meeting, was elected as follows:—Mrs Malcolm Mason (convener), Miss M. S. Silvester (secretary), Mrs D. H. Stewart (treasurer), Mesdames Lindsay, Mackersey, Afl Reeve and A. D. G. M. Laing.

On behalf of the Hastings Townswomen's Guild, the president, Mrs E. D. Wall, wished the club every success and extended an invitation to British women to visit the Guild, which offered a diversity of interests.

Mrs D. H. Stewart, for the Women's Institutes, said that they were the country sisters to the Guild and would also welcome British women to the country districts.

That attached labels bearing name and homeland be worn at the next meeting was a suggestion made by Mrs Reeve.

Club in Hastings

By Our Hawke's Bay Correspondent

A BRITISH WOMEN'S CLUB has been formed in Hastings. The idea emanated from Mrs M. Mason, of Waimarama, who was prompted by sympathy for an English girl who had come to New Zealand with her young daughter and had spent only three days with her husband when he was sent back on overseas duty. The young wife was left then entirely without friends.

At a preliminary meeting about 200 women and girls attended, the majority of whom had been resident in New Zealand for a number of years. It was felt that these older women could help the young brides in getting to know the customs and ways of their newly-adopted country. Mrs Mason was elected president at the meeting, at which a provisional committee was also formed.

British Women's Club Successfully Formed

New friendships were forged and past reminiscences shared among the 100 women who met yesterday afternoon for the first social gathering of the British Women's Overseas Club, in the Assembly Hall, Hastings. The meeting, which was convened by Mrs Malcolm Mason, assisted by the secretary, Miss M. T. Silvester, was concerned primarily with the formation of a constitution and the enrolment of members.

As far as was known, the club was one of the first of its kind, Mrs Mason said, when defining that it was not a branch of any established organisation. However, if there were other similar clubs functioning elsewhere in New Zealand, they would be glad to hear of them.

It was her wish that the "old-comers" should help the "new-comers" from overseas to join activities in town and country and foster all ideals of friendship and help, Mrs Mason continued. Those women who had come out to New Zealand many years ago had brought with them traditions of the Motherland which they had treasured and passed on to their children, and the boys and girls going away to war had strengthened that binding link.

"Now that the young people are coming back there is so much that we can do for them, especially by showing consideration to young widows who have lost their New Zealand husbands and are coming out to his country, and by visiting fellow-countrywomen in hospital," the speaker said. "Let those who are happily settled here think of the homesickness of girls not yet settled in their own homes. Advise them not to think of the great distance that separates from the Homeland, but rather how much easier travelling is becoming."

By a majority vote it was decided that the club be called the British Women's Overseas Club, with membership limited to women from Great Britain and all overseas colonies and British dominions. The expressed objective of the club were that members should contact personally, new-comers to Hastings and district, invite them to the next meeting, put them in touch with other organisations and notify the secretary if one of their number were ill.

Finance, subscription fees, honorary membership, and the holding of future meetings were discussed. It was decided to postpone the election of officers until a later date.

A vote of thanks was passed to the mayor, Mr A. I. Rainbow, for the use of the hall for the meeting.

Afternoon tea was then served, and a social hour observed.