

70 YEARS IN NEW PLYMOUTH

SALVATION ARMY'S CELEBRATION

Seventy years of Salvation Army work in New Plymouth will be remembered by members, friends and associates of the New Plymouth Salvation Army, which celebrates its 70th anniversary in the coming week-end.

The first official meeting of the Salvation Army in New Plymouth was held on March 1, 1884. According to newspaper files, the movement soon became popular in New Plymouth "and by the end of the second Sunday some 24 converts had been registered."

It was not long before the Borough Council noticed its activities and gave instructions to the police to take steps to abate the nuisance caused by people crowding around the door of the Army's meeting room. But the Army's work was not always so popular and records show that early in its growth it was subjected to jeers and practical jokes.

Nevertheless, the movement soon became established and in December, 1884, the first meeting place, Courtenay's Rooms in Devon Street, was found to be too small. When these were destroyed by fire in May, 1885, the Army moved to a hall at the corner of Devon and Currie Streets. The next move was to the Freemasons' Hall, Upper Brougham Street, which was used for eight years. Buildings on the corner of Brougham and Courtenay Streets were used until 1926 when they were demolished, and the present Citadel erected in its place. This was officially opened on June 4, 1927.

Discussing the anniversary celebrations today, Major C. H. Morley, officer in charge of the Salvation Army in New Plymouth, said that 200 invitations had been sent out to old members and friends associated with the Army and now living in other parts of New Zealand. He expected a good attendance at the celebrations and said that those who were unable to come had sent their best wishes.

FAREWELL VISIT

The celebrations are being led by Colonel C. J. Duncan, chief secretary for New Zealand. This will be Colonel and Mrs. Duncan's farewell visit to New Plymouth as in July they leave for South America where Colonel Duncan will become lieutenant commissioner in Buenos Aires. Another guest will be Commissioner J. Evan Smith, a former territorial commander, who is now living in retirement in Australia.

A conversazione is being held on Saturday afternoon and a re-union in the evening, when a pictorial history of the corps will be shown on a film-strip. This original idea consists of 46 early photographs, collected from the movement's friends and the New Plymouth Public Library, which date back to 1884, showing the first meeting rooms and some of the corps' earliest officers.

On Sunday, meetings will be held in the Army Hall. In the thanksgiving meeting in the afternoon, Commissioner Smith will be the chief speaker. The Mayor, Mr. E. O. E. Hill, will bring civic greetings and Canon W. E. W. Hurst, vicar of St. Mary's, will represent the churches. A music festival, given by members on Monday evening, will end the celebrations.