

Our Fallen Soldiers.

PERPETUATING THEIR MEMORY UNVEILING A MONUMENT

Over a year ago a movement was initiated in Benalla having for its object the erection of a memorial to perpetuate the memory of those of our soldiers in this district who fell in battle during the great war and some weeks ago the purpose indicated was brought to fruition, a most attractive, as also expensive, monument having been raised at the west end of the Broken River bridge, in the heart of the township, at the entrance to our public gardens.

As well become the traditions of the war, it was decided to unveil this striking memorial on what is now so widely known as Anzac Day, the 25th of April, the same being the anniversary of the landing of the Australian and New Zealand troops on the shores of Gallipoli—where so many of our noble manhood fell in the cause of British liberty and civilisation.

The occasion was fortunately marked by fair weather, though a sombre, or a sullen, sky bespoke the advent of inclemency, which, however was not actually realised.

Consistent with arrangements made for the occasion, the proceedings commenced about half-past two, at which hour hundreds of people, including many persons from external localities, had assembled at the site, of the newly-erected memorial, together with the children and their teachers (with Inspector Green in the foreground) of the various State schools of the district, and for about two hours after the vast assemblage present—largely composed of relatives and friends of our fallen manhood—took part in a programme marked by solemnity and patriotic sentiments.

The proceedings of the afternoon were opened by the singing of the National Anthem, in which all heartily joined, and then the Rev N. D. Herring, of the Church of England, delivered an appropriate and impressive prayer, the audience listening thereto with such solemnity as befitted the occasion.

The next item on the programme was an address by the chairman (Mr G. Walker, president of the shire) who spoke for about half-an-hour, during which he touched on various aspects of the war, at the same time eulogising our heroic boys who fell in battle for their bravery and self sacrifice in the cause of the Empire.

Mr W. H. Guppy followed by delivering a statement, as secretary of the memorial committee, at the same time pointing out that the fact most worthy of note was that the £915 raised for erecting the monument before them was a voluntary gift of the people of

the district.

Dr Harris, M.L.C., in a somewhat lengthy speech—too long to report in detail with the space at our disposal—traversed the great and historic work performed by Australians during the war—from their landing at Gallipoli to their deeds of valour in Palestine, at Amiens, Villers, Bretonneaux and elsewhere in Flanders, declaring that the Australian troops had made a name for themselves throughout the world. At the same time the speaker eulogised the work of those who stayed at home and raised £430,000 to help the Allied cause, in erecting a hospital at Caulfield to relieve our wounded soldiers, and in joining in the many noble deeds of the Red Cross Society. He deplored the loss of the 60,000 of our boys who fell in battle, and, in philosophic tones, pointed out to his hearers that, after all, war did not seem to be as bad as some folk thought it was.

Major-General Hughes now unveiled the monument. On the front thereof was the following:—

"This Monument is raised to the Memory of the Heroic Soldiers from the Shire of Benalla who made the Supreme Sacrifice at the Great War 1914-19. Erected by the Residents of Benalla and District, A.D., 1922."

On both the sides and back of the monument appear the names of the fallen men, numbering 140 altogether.

After the unveiling ceremony the Benalla Brass Band played the 'Last Post,' two hymns having been previously sung—"The Reconciliation" and "Oh God, Our Help." The singing of the National Anthem brought the proceedings to a close.