

War Memorial

UNVEILED AT RIVERSTONE.

BY MR. R. B. WALKER, M.L.A.

CITIZENS' PATHETIC SPEECHES.

On the afternoon of Saturday the 8th inst., although the sultry heat of the noon-day hour was far spent its oppressiveness still prevailed, nevertheless a large concourse of people assembled to witness the unveiling of the Riverstone and District War Memorial. As the necessary details were being arranged to carry out the homage to the memory of those who but a few short years back had oft frequented the site in the flesh, it seemed as if the Spiritual Power, that can alone control nature's laws, became merged in sympathy with the approaching sacred ceremony for the burning sun hid itself within the clouds, and in its journey westward, should it appear at intervals, its scorching rays suffered defeat in the gentle but cooling breeze from the south. The attendance was exceptionally large, people from every portion of Riverstone and district being present. To the strain of the martial music of the Riverstone Brass Band many returned soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant F. R. Hayward, surrounded the monument as a guard of honor.

The chairman (Cr. J. J. Pye, J.P.), had many a sympathetic face turned towards him whilst presiding for they keenly felt for the man who held at this moment a dual position—the other being that he too mourned the loss of a dear soldier son. (A visitor leaving for Sydney said: "I will never forget the sight of one possessing such christian fortitude who, with outstretched trembling hands, foretold his belief of meeting his loved one again in a land where happiness plays through eternity.").

From the remarks of Mr. R. B. Walker, M.L.A., it was most apparent that he felt he had been deeply honored in the task allocated to him to unveil the memorial. Then again it was one of the saddest hours of his parliamentary career, for amongst his many hearers he would here and there discern a heart that mourned yet he was

ms many hearers he would here and there discern a heart that mourned, yet he was bravely endeavoring to stay a straying tear of grief. He made reference to the many brave men who left the Hawkesbury—of which Riverstone was prominent as one of

its boundaries—to fight for the empire whilst it stood in peril. It was something indeed to be proud of to represent an electorate from which so many had gone voluntarily to do battle for right against might. He was frequently associated in the rejoicings that followed when a brave lad returned home. One of the sad pictures that followed victory was such as now being witnessed. Mr. Walker spoke of His Majesty the King's wishes in regard to casting aside all worldly affairs on the 11th day of the 11th month at the 11th hour, with bowed heads, reverent in thought of the deliverance granted in the world's greatest war. Every time he passed Riverstone's war memorial it would cause him to pause and think to the sacred memory of her soldiers who fell in action.

Mr. Walker then unveiled the monument which is a fine structure of the best free-stone clean rubbed. It stands eleven feet eight inches high and is five feet square and consists of the following sections:—Flagstone, two bases, die, cap and spire, surrounded by kerbing eight feet square with railing of a one bar rope design fixed into champhored posts eighteen inches high. The spire carries a tracery hand-carved pair of crossed rifles, and the first base a countersunk panel manifesting the words, "Riverstone and District." The second base has a marble panel let in containing particulars of unveiling. The die has the marble scroll firmly dowelled on face carrying the names of the fallen soldiers together with inscription. It stands in the most central site of Riverstone, namely, immediately opposite the railway station exit and facing the main public thoroughfare. It is intended by the committee to erect a suitable fence and the enclosure will be laid out as a lawn or garden.

The monument was designed and erected by Mr. George Cook, manager of the Windsor branch of Messrs. E. L. Kingsley and Co.'s monumental works. Mr. Cook also carved the crossed rifles on the spire of the monument

carved the crossed lines on the apex of the monument.

On the monument being unveiled it disclosed the following lettering:—

**To the memory of the Illustrious
Dead of Riverstone and District
who fell in the Great World
War, 1914-1918.**

J. SYMONDS.
A. SHOWERS.
A. MASON.
H. SCHOFIELD.
E. S. MATHEWS.
A. R. PYE.
J. ROBBINS.
W. MORRIS.
R. RANKINE.
R. L. WILSON.
O. C. FORSSBERG.
J. CARTER.
N. WILSON.
C. H. WELLS.
A. DAVIES.
R. LAMBERT.
W. E. SMITH.
A. R. SAUNDERCOCK.
C. CLOUT.
B. J. S. HARDING, M.M.
A. J. OUVRIER.
E. SCHOFIELD.

Then came the soldiers elegy to fallen comrades—The Last Post. It caused the guard of honor to stand rigid at attention for they had oft heard it before on the war flung line of the old world. The mother interpreted it as a token of sympathy for her son who had left her with such a brave smile the day he embarked, alas never to return. The wife broke down, her heavy load of grief was far too great to carry. A father thought of the vacant chair at home, and the sister could but think enviously of her girl friend who still possessed a brother. The sweetheart, too, recalled happy days spent "roaming in the gloaming," and many a one sighed for the voice of a friend now resting in the "Great Beyond." Bravely they came, one by one, to lay a wreath as a token of loving memory for their dead.

Colonel J. J. Paine, V.D., said he had been much affected by the sad events occurring

much affected by the sad events occurring that afternoon, and though sorrow reigned he felt it was a sacred duty to be present and pay his respects to fallen comrades. He thought it was a fitting memorial, and lest we should forget it was situated in a well-chosen site to remind us of the debt we owe to those who had made the supreme sacrifice on our behalf.

Cr. Page, who was introduced as one of the most active war workers of the Blacktown Shire, made fitting reference to Riverstone's fallen heroes, concluding with an earnest exhortation that should misfortune frown upon a returned soldier to stand by him as faithfully as he had done towards us in the dark dreary days of war.

Cr. Lalor said that he readily accepted the invitation to be present that afternoon for he was anxious to pay his respects to those who fell in action. He affirmed that Riverstone and district had nobly played its part in the recent world's greatest tragedy. The war memorial unveiled that afternoon would remind men of to-day and future years of those who gave their lives to enable the living to continue to enjoy the principles and freedom of the British flag.

Lieut. Hayward spoke of glorious deeds he had witnessed enacted by men of the A.I.F. He had seen men physically worn out with days of steadfast battle, hurried to another portion of the line, and then to a man courageously enter the zone yet again. He cited one instance of a battalion numerically strong being reduced to sixty odd. Those who lacked the experience he affirmed could never value the valor displayed or the sacrifices made.

Ald. H. R. Reid, foremost in Riverstone's welcomes home to returned men and local patriotic work, was likewise full of gratitude to the memory of the names that adorned their war memorial. They would cherish that memorial because it manifested the lads who would not return to home, sweet home. He sympathised deeply with those who mourned the loss of husband, son or brother. They had indeed sustained a sad loss, but he knew that as it was ordained that it should so be they were proud that their loved one died for love of country. In regard to those who had been given

In regard to those who had been given the privilege to return, he knew that should they in the future need the helping hand, Riverstone would readily respond.

One could but admire the christian modesty of Cadet Morgan (a returned man), representing the Windsor Salvation Army. The grand truth of the scriptures that "greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for another" had been richly unfolded to him whilst away with the lads, and now whilst participating in their endeavor to honor the fallen yet again was he reminded of that holy text. On behalf of the Salvation Army he sympathised with those who mourned for a loved one.

Mr. A. W. Setchell, one of Riverstone's recent returned soldiers, was most cordially

encouraged when he mounted the platform to propose a vote of thanks to Mr. R. B. Walker, M.L.A., the chairman, the guard of honor, Bugler Mullinger, the Riverstone Brass Band, visitors, subscribers and friends for their assistance in the sacred proceedings of memory to those brave lads who lie out yonder. Mr. Setchell has just resumed pastoral duties in connection with the local Church of England. In the empire's darkest days, clerical garb was laid aside and he donned the khaki uniform. Whilst waiting in Blighty to proceed to the fighting line the armistice was announced. He rejoiced when the signal for peace fell but must admit he felt a bit unhappy that he had not been sent in an earlier draft for he wanted to have a go with the foe of such despotic mood. Anyrate he was a richer man spiritually for he had learnt of the sterling worth of the "digger."

During the proceedings Mr. H. L. Lawson, on behalf of his committee, announced the following apologies for non attendance: His Excellency Sir Walter Davidson—an engagement already accepted for that day debarred his attendance. His Excellency wrote stating he was deeply interested in the Riverstone and district war memorial and trusted the unveiling would be such as the event merited. The Colonial Treasurer, the Hon. J. C. L. Fitzpatrick, M.L.A., who much regretted that he would be out of the State that day. His Worship the Mayor of Wind-

gretted that he would be out of the State that day. His Worship the Mayor of Windsor (Ald. J. W. Ross) had written that he too had found it was impossible for him to attend. The Rev. W. J. Roberts and the Rev. G. A. Hill, M.A., would have been present but clerical work appertaining to their respective churches was alone responsible for their absence. The committee had expected the assistance of their mutual friend the Rev. B. McDonnell and thereupon Mr. Walker tendered an apology. The rev. gentleman, it was ascertained, at the last moment had to forego the visit owing to other duties.

At a later stage Mr. Lawson, again on behalf of the war memorial committee, tendered their deepest sympathy to those who mourned. They sincerely trusted that the Divine Father, to whom they were taught to look in their troublous times, would sustain them in the irreparable loss they had been called upon to bear. He narrated a pretty legend of an angel writing in a book of gold who was asked to write down the name of one who loved his fellow man. The angel wrote and vanished. The next night it appeared with a great awakened light and read the names of those whom God had blest, and lo-be-hold this man's name led all the rest. When the skyline of national safety was enveloped with dark angry war clouds many so loved their fellow men that they went forth to do battle, suffered a hell of shot and shell, and fell. He was convinced and would carry this belief to the grave that the sentiments expressed in the legend had been recorded likewise for the illustrious dead of Riverstone and district.

The band played the National Anthem and thus the proceedings relative to the unveiling terminated.
