

# Paruna Soldiers' Memorial

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## FOUNDATION STONE LAID BY MR. ALLEN PETCH

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### Brown's Well District Honors Those Who Fell in Great War

On Saturday at 3 p.m. in the presence of about 300 persons from the Brown's Well and neighbouring districts, Mr. Allen Petch laid the foundation stone of the district's Soldiers' Memorial at Paruna. It is to take the form of two rooms attached to the southern end of the fine Institute building, one of which will be a soldiers' Club room and the other a ladies' room with a library attached. Both rooms will be furnished in modern fashion.

Mr. Eric Edwards, in a fine speech, said that they had gathered to see a foundation stone laid in honour of those who had given their lives in the Great War. The returned soldier continued, "I want you to cast your minds back over the years following the War and recapture the spirit of those days. The young people scarcely know what that means perhaps, but to the older men and the parents it is easy to remember those days. All owe a debt to those who gave their lives for freedom." In many a town, both great and small, very beautiful memorials had arisen

very beautiful memorials had arisen rural centres taking just as much pride in their small memorials as the large cities had. This district, said the speaker, had played its part during the War, and though a fine sum of money had been raised in the desire to erect a fitting memorial, circumstances over which no man had any control had prevented them from doing so. Now, however, they were in a position to proceed with the work which would honour the soldier's memory and he was sure when completed the memorial would be a worthy one for the whole district. The Institute committee had made a great effort to raise money. The sum of £35 had been given in wheat, and £60 raised in cash. On behalf of the Institute committee he thanked all for their splendid help. The speaker felt sure that many more donations would be freely given. No donation was too small. It was not the amount given but the spirit behind the donation that counted.

During the negotiations in connection with the memorial the Institute committee had been most anxious to co-operate with the returned soldiers in the district, said the speaker. He added that the committee felt that the stone to be laid should be in the name of the late Mr. John Petch, who was a friend to all in the district and a grand old English gentleman who took a keen interest in the soldiers and everything connected with the district. So, he said, the memorial stone would be laid by his son, Mr. Allen Petch—this choice was made by the diggers themselves.

Seated quite close to Mr. Edwards while he spoke was Mrs. S. J. Petch, wife of the late John Petch. She is known as the grand old lady of the

wife of the late John Petch. She is known as the grand old lady of the Brown's Well District and is 84 years of age.

#### Mr. Petch's Address

Mr. Allen Petch said he wished all to realize that he was not speaking to them as Allen but in the name of the whole Petch family. He keenly felt such an honour paid to his father and mother, together with the whole family. On behalf of his mother and family he thanked Mr. Edwards and them all. He recalled one great principle of his father's life. It was that if a thing could not be paid for it should not be got at all. Time payments, his father had said, were much more a curse than a blessing to many people. Such an outlook, said the speaker, may have had a great deal to do with the delay in erecting a memorial to soldiers' His father during his life had taken a keen in-

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terest in the whole district, and more particularly in the early days had his lead been followed to the marked benefit of the community in general. Mr. Petch said that one of the greatest joys of both his father's and mother's life had been establishing of their church, which had been opened free of debt. His father had always maintained that a memorial to soldiers should be free of debt when it was opened. The speaker was honoured at being asked to lay the foundation stone in memory of those who had sacrificed their lives. He recalled the pledge given by the Institute committee to erect a memorial as soon as possible. They all knew the causes of the delay, and it was his desire to see such a memorial opened free of debt in a short while. In many a discussion the Institute committee had always had one thing before them, and that was that the memorial should be something use-

memorial should be something useful to the district. He knew that behind the committee was the public and that the money required to complete the building would be forthcoming.

Mr. Edwards then handed a silver trowel to Mr. Petch, and the stone was well and truly laid.

Engraved on the marble slab are the words:—

**"This Stone was laid in the Name  
of the Late John S. Petch as a  
Token of Esteem by Returned  
soldiers and Residents. 19/3/38."**