

## Leitchville Roll of Honor.

### THE UNVEILING CEREMONY

#### A SUCCESSFUL AND MEMORABLE EVENT.

The residents of Leitchville have good reason to be gratified with the results of their Roll of Honor demonstration at the Horton-Leitchville Hall last Friday evening. Considering the darkness of the night, and the almost impassable condition of many of the roads, the assemblage of such a large and representative concourse of people was a flattering testimony to the popular character of the event, and of its complete success. There could have been hardly fewer than five hundred people present; many of these hailing from considerable distances. No doubt the expected presence of three prominent Federal and State parliamentarians did much to create interest in the occasion; for all three are representative men and capable speakers. One of their number—Mr. S. dney Sampson—did not appear it is true, but the other two, Mr. Senator Plain, and Mr. Henry Angus, so completely and satisfactorily filled the bill as to leave but a doubtful sense as to what may have been missed by the absence of their colleague.

The chair was taken by Mr. Stanley Gordon, chairman of the Hall committee, who appropriately opened the proceedings by calling upon the audience to sing the National Anthem. Then came an inter-nounced programming of vocal and instrumental music, pleasingly rendered and well received. The items included the following—Song, "She who gives her son," Miss Jean Findlay; song, Miss Bessie Pearce; duet, "So long, Letty," Misses Findlay and Pearce; pianoforte overture, Miss Stanfield; pianoforte selection, Lieut. Mitchell; recitation, Miss Meninger; song, Mr. Dehne; song, Mr. Randall; cornet solo, Mr. Hinchcliffe; Miss Hancock obliging officiated as accompanist.

Senator Plain, having been formally introduced by the Chairman, delivered a lengthy speech which partook of a general review of the war on the various fronts, as these present themselves after three years of conflict. Incidentally, he

years of conflict. Incidentally, he explained the absence of Mr. Sampson to have been due to unavoidable causes, and paid a tribute of appreciation to the worth of his old State Parliamentary associate, Mr. Angus. It was true that he had then sat on the other side of the House, but he had become dissatisfied with the attitude of that other side, and had been compelled to cross over. He now sat on the same side as their member, Mr. Angus. (laughter and applause). It was not, he maintained, his own fault that he had changed sides. He had been compelled to do so. He had either to do that or sink his principles. Rather, therefore, than be false to his convictions, he had pushed a-side his old associates, and done what he felt to be his duty. The Federal elections being now passed, he was over his own troubles, and waited to see what was to be the fate of Mr. Angus at the coming State elections. Unlike himself, Mr. Angus liked to fight, but he hoped the Gunbower electors would give him a walk-over. They could not find a better man, and that being so, why put him to the trouble of a contest?

He was glad to hear of the loyalty of the people of that district; to know how they had responded to the bugle call of national duty, giving their country of their bravest and best—men who had not feared to face the grimmest battle fields, nor, where the need arose, to make the greatest personal sacrifices. He could not understand how any young man in health and strength could see this life and death struggle between barbarism and civilization without wanting to do his bit. The young men who had gone to the front were spending themselves for the future of the race. No one should neglect the opportunity to help on the cause.

Before resuming his seat Senator Plain performed the ceremony of unveiling the Roll of Honor. In doing so he expressed his appreciation of the many brave names upon it—sons many of them of fathers there that night. Those names shed lustre on the district, and would go down in history.

The tablet, which was placed on the right side of the platform, is a beautiful example of the cabinet-maker's art. Greek in its chaste and classical design, it is made of choicest Australian hardwood, polished a rich brown, with plain Gothic lettering in gold.

Gothic lettering in gold.

Certificates of honor were subsequently presented to Messrs E. Dunne, and D. G. Hore, whilst several were reserved for other returned men.

Mr. Angus, who was cordially received, said he was pleased to be present on such an occasion, and to find himself on the same platform as Senator Plain (applause), and his gallant friend, Lieut. Mitchell, who had fought for his country on the heights of Gallipoli (applause). He wished to congratulate the electors of the district on the part they had played by returning to the Federal Parliament patriots of the calibre of Senators Plain, Bolton and Fairbairn, each of whom had made, and were still making, great sacrifices and contributions to the great cause of patriotic devotion (applause). All Senator Plain's brothers were serving at the front; whilst the Senator had eight little children at home, showing that he too had been serving the cause. Senator Bolton had four sons serving at the front, and had himself gone through the Gallipoli campaign; whilst his two daughters were nursing wounded soldiers (applause). Senator Fairbairn's only son was fighting on the plains of

France (applause). Proceeding, the speaker said he thought the people of the district were doing honor to the boys who had gone to represent them in the beautiful Roll of Honor they had unveiled that evening. Those boys were fighting side by side with the defenders of civilization everywhere. He understood that something like seventy young men had gone from that district. They had done great work; noble deeds; and they were going to be a considerable factor in deciding this world wide and bloody war (hear, hear). It was not what they lived for, but what they were prepared to die for that tested their characters. And those boys were prepared to die for the freedom and honor of Australia. The parents of those boys might well be proud of their sons who had gone from Leitchville. They had been prepared to make the great sacrifice; and he sympathised with those who had lost sons in the conflict—sons who had done their duty so well. It was better to have their sons die on the battlefield than

well. It was better to have their sons die on the battlefield than see them traitors to their duty. He believed there was no family in that district that had not members representing them at the front; and he was glad to be present at such a meeting to do honor to such gallant citizens. He had been unable to avoid making comparisons between Melbourne and places like the Kerang Shire in respect to the patriotism displayed. He found that in the Kerang Shire 10 and 12 per cent. of the people had enlisted, or gone to the war. This was a magnificent contribution (hear, hear). Unfortunately it was not a fair proportion. There were many families in their shire and electorate who had not contributed any of their members (hear, hear). He did not know, of course, the reasons which prevented some of those boys from going; but he maintained that where there was an opportunity to go even now, that opportunity ought to be taken. For never were the boys who were serving so tired and deserving of a rest as now, and yet so loth to leave the battlefield, if to do was to leave Australia unrepresented in the Empire's battles. If there were any lads in the district eligible to go, he would ask them to consider their position. He would ask them to come forward and join their names with the lads who appeared on their Honor Roll that night. They required men to do the work at home. He realised that. It was a shame, however, that men who could go would not consider the claims of the men who had gone, and who needed to be relieved. He had known cases where parents kept their boys back. He would say to all such—you are doing your boys the greatest injury. They all joined in execrating the methods and spirit of the Germans; but did it occur to those present that there may be names of men in their own shire who will be looked upon with contempt in the future? God forbid that there should be any there that evening amongst that number (hear, hear). There would be a good many marked men. Those who had suffered for the Empire would have no pity for those cowards who had stayed at home without reasonable excuse (applause). Whatever the consequences might be to himself, he (the speaker) would continue to speak in the interests of the Empire (applause). He said he was proud of the people of that dis-

trict. He was proud for more reasons than one—not only for the contributions of men they had made to fight the country's battles, but also for the pioneer settlers amongst them. He saw in that assembly men who were boys with himself forty years ago—men whom he had played with. He realised that they had carved out the district. There were others who had come later, and had also made good. They had found that the Cohuna district was a prosperous district. He could understand the good work of their boys; for they were the sons of men who had already bravely done their part in the development of their country. (Applause).

Referring to the Roll of Honor, Mr. Angus said:—I hope sincerely that many of these brave lads will return home again, and that when that day comes they will be able to take part in some of their old enjoyments. Make them believe that you are looking forward to their return; that you are true to the ideals of the war—no I.W.W.'s or wreckers (applause). Let these brave men feel you are true and loyal to them, and to the nation they are fighting for—that they will continue to fight for, so long as the need arises, and so long as there are national ideals to cherish and defend (applause).

Lieut. Mitchell, representing the State Recruiting Committee, then made a lengthy appeal to the eligible young men present to come forward and join the colors. They had heard through Mr. Angus that evening of the loyalty of his Parliamentary colleagues; but Mr. Angus had modestly made no reference to his own sacrifices in the cause. Yet he had given his two sons, one of whom had given his life; whilst he had heard Mr. Angus express his keen regret that he was himself beyond the age limit of service. Some irresponsible persons had said Australia had done enough. But where would they be to-day if they had relied on Russia? It was true three hundred thousand men had left these shores; but there were three hundred thousand who could have gone, and who were wanted, but who had remained behind. But despite the voluntary system, numbers were coming forward. Within the previous fortnight there had been one hundred recruits obtained within the Shire of Kerang,

tained within the Shire of Kerang, and over fifty of these, he believed, would pass the doctor. There were three sections of the community the recruiting agent had to deal with:—First, those who

said "I will;" second, those who said "I would," and these were the majority left in Australia; and third, those who said "I will not." These included the I.W.W., and a crowd of people who would be better out of Australia. They were many of them the scum of the earth. They required 7000 recruits per month to make up for losses, and they were getting only half that number. This meant that the boys at the front had to do double shift. He warned those present that the men who could not give satisfactory reasons for not enlisting would be marked men when the army returned. He would not like to be in the slacks or shoes then. Lieut. Mitchell finally invited any would-be recruit to come forward; but there was no response.

Cr. Randall J.P., who said he was glad to have been present to have heard the magnificent address of Senator Plain, remarked that the Government of Victoria was in need of men to assist it in connection with the disastrous strike. If the Government appealed to them, and to the farmers of the surrounding district, they would help them to their utmost, in order to bring about a peaceful ending to the strike struggle, by offering their labor. He moved, "That we, the farmers in this hall tonight are willing to give the Government of Victoria every assistance in our power in its struggle with the strikers." They were glad to meet that night to honor the brave boys who had gone to represent them at the front—some of whom they had helped to send off. They wished them a safe return. Unfortunately, some of them would not return. They had died to defend the Empire; don't they enjoyed that evening. He honored these boys. (Applause).

Cr. Richardson seconded Cr. Randall's resolution.

Cr. J. McK King J.P. said he had great pleasure in supporting it. In doing so he desired to congratulate the Hall Committee on the fine attendance, despite the bad roads, they had secured for the unveiling of the Roll of Honor.

bad roads, they had secured by the unveiling of the Roll of Honor and also the lads themselves on the beautiful Honor Roll itself. He believed there was no other district in the Kerang Shire where men had responded to the call to arms so nobly as in the district around them. But it seemed to him nevertheless, the less that there were a good many others who could have done also, had they resolved to do so. (applause). But they could not force them to go. Some of them excused themselves from service on the ground that their mother's and father's hearts would be broken if they went. But was that not almost an insult to the mothers and fathers of those of their lads who had gone? It was equivalent to saying such mothers and fathers had very little heart. (Applause.)

The resolution was duly put to the meeting and carried without a dissident.

The hour was now late, and hearty votes of thanks were duly accorded to the three distinguished parliamentary visitors to the Chairman, and to the helpers generally and the meeting was brought to a formal conclusion by the singing once more of the National Anthem.

A number of the younger people, however, remained to attend a dance.