

LATE MR. ROGER WATKINS.

**MEMORIAL TABLET UNVEILED
BY COMMISSIONER.**

**TRIBUTE TO FORMER STATION
MASTER.**

A number of railway employees and residents of Roma gathered at the Roma railway station on Tuesday morning last to participate in a ceremony which was unique in the railway history of Queensland, and also a striking tribute of appreciation of a former official both by the department and deceased's fellow employees. The ceremony consisted of the unveiling of a memorial tablet to Mr. Roger Watkins, formerly station master at Roma 1920-1923.

Mr. E. W. Brock said they had met that morning to show their respect to the late Mr. Roger Watkins. Railway men had decided to show their appreciation of Mr. Watkins by erecting a memorial tablet. They had subscribed the required amount, and asked permission of the Commissioner to erect the tablet on the station buildings, and he had consented to it being erected in the booking hall. Mr. Davidson had also kindly consented to unveil the tablet that morning. Mr. Watkins had been station master at Roma during 1920-1923, and had always exhibited those qualities essential to a railway man. He did his duty to the Department and to railway men, and although he did not take a prominent part in public affairs was always recognised as a good citizen.

Mr. J. J. Petford, Acting General Manager (Toowoomba Division), said he endorsed the remarks made regarding the esteem in which his old friend Mr. Watkins had been held. He had known Mr. Watkins a good many years

and a more conscientious officer he had never met. He had been deeply grieved to hear of his death in Roma, which had caused a decided loss to the Railway Department and to the residents of Roma.

Mr. J. W. Davidson (Commissioner for Railways) said that when asked to give permission for the tablet to be erected on the Roma station buildings, it was the first request of the kind he had ever received. He had to consider whether it would be a wise thing to do, or whether it would not be a better thing to erect the memorial tablet on the grave. The late Roger Watkins was one of his oldest friends in the Railway Department. Any duty called upon to do he did with a smile; he was always on the spot and ready for the job. He had earned the respect of railway men with the highest qualifications. He had a lovable disposition which attracted men to him. In their department they had all sorts—men of great ability, and men of poor ability. Men with charming manners—and men they referred to sometimes as “a bit of barbed wire,” the end of whose ambition was to come out on top. Mr. Watkins' manner had been always the same to everybody. If they had a lot more Roger Watkins in the Railway Department it would be better. Railway men in Queensland compared well with railway men elsewhere—perhaps better. From what he knew himself they compared exceedingly well with those elsewhere. He was glad to be with them to do honor to his memory. He was sorry he had gone, but all had to go some time. Perhaps this tablet would remind them of his many good qualities which they would try to emulate.

The tablet, which bears the following inscription, was then unveiled by Mr. Davidson:—

Davidson:—

“To the memory of Roger J. Watkins, Station Master, Roma, 1920-1923. Died September 3, 1923. Erected by the Staff who appreciated his kindness and manliness.”

The tablet is a plain marble slab, mounted on a piece of silky oak, and was the work of Mr. A. Petrie, Brisbane.