

THE BOX HILL WAR MEMORIAL.

HONORING THE NUNAWADING BOYS.

GREAT DOINGS AT BOX HILL.

The ceremony of unveiling the memorial, erected at the intersection of Station street and White Horse road, Box Hill, in honor of the men who went from the Nunawading district to the wars in S' Africa and China, was carried out with great eclat on Tuesday afternoon. Despite the fact that there was a heavy downpour of rain about the time fixed for the unveiling, a very large crowd assembled, and great interest was manifested in the proceedings.

The memorial is in the form of an obelisk, hewn out of red polished granite from Gabo Island, with base of Malmsbury stone. A drinking fountain, with taps on each side, is attached to the lower portion of the obelisk, while the upper part is adorned with handsome bronze brackets carrying two large gas lamps. Thus the structure is not only a striking ornament to the town, but also serves useful purposes in the direction of thirst-quenching and illuminating. On the pedestal is the following inscription:—

"Erected to commemorate the loyal and patriotic spirit displayed by the men of this district, whose names are inscribed hereon, in response to the empire's call for volunteers for the wars in South Africa and China, 1899 to 1902, and also in grateful recognition of Divine Providence for the return of so many of the number."

The obelisk contains the following inscriptions and names:—

"South Africa: Corporals T. Linsley, W. J. Young, G. R. Button, Privates W. Foote, J. F. Towl, C. W. Towl, G. Lear, J. U. Needham, A. Johnstone, E. P. Rich, W. Thomas, S. Yuille, E. G. Wheeler, G. Dunn, E. W. Welch, A. Webster. China: W. Pope, A.B. In Memoriam: Lance-corporal G. R. Button, killed at Wilmansrust, South Africa, June 12, 1901."

The monumental work was carried out by the well-known firm of Messrs Wilson and Corben, in a highly creditable manner.

Punctually at 4 o'clock, Cr Hunter, the president of the shire, from a plat-

form erected near the memorial, briefly stated the object of the gathering, welcomed the visitors, and called upon the Premier of Victoria, to perform the unveiling ceremony.

Premier Peacock, in the course of a stirring address, remarked that the memorial would always stand as an outward and visible sign to all who passed up and down the road of the fact that the residents of Box Hill had done their duty, and in doing it had honored themselves. He was greatly pleased to see so many of the younger generation present to join with their elders in doing honor to the men who had left the district to fight for the empire. These men took up a responsibility not only for themselves, but also for those who had been left behind, and the latter had only done their duty in recognising the sturdy spirit shown. It was not long since it had been asserted, and he had been chaffed on the point, that the average Australian native would not prove equal to those who had preceded him. The time had come when that assertion had been shown to be false, and the average Australian natives were found to be not a whit behind those of the land from which their fathers and mothers had come. The work now being done in South Africa was not merely the subjugation of the Boers, but it was an object lesson to the whole world. Marshal Soult said on the day of the battle of Waterloo, "I know these English; they will die where they stand; they will never surrender," and the same spirit had been proved to be existent in the breasts of Australians, Canadians and Cape loyalists, who had fought and were fighting in South Africa. (Applause). Major Eddy furnished a proof of this on the day he died at Pink Hill when he said, "Boys, the Wilts are in a tight place, and we must cut them out, no matter what the cost?" There was the unselfish character, the true patriotism of the soldier displayed by an Australian native. And did they not know that when that story was read in England, Ireland and Scotland every reader must have felt a thrill of pride to know that men from these southern climes had displayed the spirit their ancestors displayed at

southern climes had displayed the spirit their ancestors displayed at Waterloo? When the Canadians, born under the British flag, were facing Cronje, at Paardeberg, they were told, "You must hold that point against almost certain death," and today the bones of those French Canadians were lying there in testimony to all generations that under the British flag men had been born who, though speaking a different language, and notwithstanding that their ancestors had been subjugated by the British, still had learned to appreciate the benefits and privileges bestowed on them under the British flag. (Applause). They could understand also the feeling which the work of Australian soldiers aroused among the Continental nations. Those nations were jealous of us—there was no use blinking the fact—they were jealous of the flag which protected all the subjects of the empire, without regard to color, class, or creed, and they were jealous of the fact that the British nation was the only nation that had colonised successfully, and that always treated its people justly and fairly, whether they were white or black or yellow. Was it not certain that the imperial rulers and the councillors of those foreign nations had discussed the events of this war over the council-table, had looked at the probabilities and the possibilities and had recognised that if they touched one portion of the empire they would have to deal with all the outlying portions. Not long ago Rudyard Kipling wrote:—"On the bones of the English the English flag is stayed." That could be said no longer. Not only on the bones of Englishman, Irishman, Scotchman, or Welshman was the flag of England stayed, but also on the bones of the Australians, the French-Canadians, and the South African loyalists. He believed that every true and loyal son of the soil in Australia was prepared to do what those men had done whom they were that day

honoring, namely, recognise their responsibilities, and stand shoulder to shoulder under the flag that had done

shoulder under the flag that had done so much for progress and freedom. (Applause).

After the premier had unveiled the memorial three cheers were given for the king.

Mr Balfour, M.L.C., remarked that he was highly pleased to be present to join with them in such an important undertaking. They should be proud of the fact that more men had gone from this district than from any other single district in the state, and also that this district was the first to recognise the services of its soldiers. The wars in South Africa and China had shown that there beat but one heart throughout all the empire. He regretted that Campbell-Bannerman should provide texts upon which Anglo-phobists could hang sermons by saying things against the British soldier which were taken up on the continent and exaggerated, and made a great force for evil against the English. Had England not gone into the war she must have become a second rate power, and would have been driven from South Africa. During this war, he asserted, there had been more humane treatment than had ever before been displayed in warfare, and he did not doubt but the men from the district could prove to them that the soldiers were generous, kind and humane even in the midst of the horrors of war. The war had taught Australians to value the past history of England, and to rejoice in the battles won, the bravery shown, the blood shed for liberty by our people. (Applause).

Mr W. S. Keast, M.L.A., also expressed pleasure in taking part in the movement in honor of those who richly deserved to be honored. The memorial was a great credit to the people of the district, who set a good example in thus recognising the services of those who had left everything to fight for the flag. The Australians had nobly proved on the battlefield that they were worthy sons of worthy sires. It was very gratifying to find that out of the number who had gone from the district, one only had fallen, while the rest had come back in excellent health.

After Cr Bishop, the hon. secretary to the memorial committee, had read apologies from a number who were

apologies from a number who were unable to be present, he pointed out that the committee were a few pounds short of the amount required, but had no doubt the balance would be forthcoming.

Cheers were given for the premier and for the returned soldiers, and after a lively selection had been played by the Box Hill military band, under Mr Harry Foster's leadership, an adjournment was made to the shire hall, where refreshments were provided and handed round by a committee of ladies, whose hospitality was highly appreciated.

The chairman, President Hunter, proposed the toast of "The King," which was received with musical honors.

Cr Wilson, in proposing the toast of "The Premier," remarked that they had every reason to be gratified at the success achieved in raising an imperishable memorial to the loyalty and valor of the men who went from Nuuwading, and an additional reason for gratefulness in having the unveiling performed by the premier, who unquestionably enjoyed the esteem of every section of the community. It fell to the lot of few men, and very few premiers, to be held in such universal esteem. The premier well-merited the confidence and esteem in which he was held on account of his thorough devotion to duty, and the energy and enthusiasm he displayed in trying to alleviate the conditions of those least able to help themselves. There were some who might not agree with the premier's politics. (Cr Bishop: Hear, hear.) Cr Bishop represented the Tory element in the district, and he might well say "Hear, hear." (Laughter.) All were agreed that they had in the premier a politician who was actuated by the highest considerations for the welfare and prosperity of the people at large, and the district was honored by his presence.

Premier Peacock, in responding, said he was sorry his wife was not present to hear the encomiums of Cr Wilson, who had alluded to Cr Bishop as representing the Tory element. The liberal heaven must have been at work if what was once a conservative stronghold had been so transformed that there was only a single Tory left. (Laughter.) Joking apart he was exceedingly pleased to be present. After Crs Wilson and Bishop had interviewed him and extracted a promise that he would come out if he possibly could, their member, Mr Keast, in his emphatic way, insisted that he should come, and there was no help for it, he had to come, although it meant postponing a meeting of the cabinet. When he mentioned to the state governor the object of his visit to Box Hill, he was delighted to find that the residents were setting such a splendid example to districts of greater wealth and larger population, who had so far taken no action to honor their soldiers. By the erection of their memorial the people of this district

to honor their soldiers. By the erection of their memorial the people of this district had raised themselves in the estimation of the country, though they had done the least they could do in recognising the loyalty and valor of the men who had gone to fight for king and empire. As a young man he had felt the hostile criticism of some of his elders, who said that the Australian race was degenerating, but the Australian soldiers had proved the utter truthfulness of such criticism. As a father and mother felt revived through some creditable performance on the part of their offspring, so did the nation feel revived by the splendid work of the young men. The parliament and people had responded nobly to the empire's call, and proved unmistakably that the race had not degenerated. In speaking to a member of the mother of parliaments, he asked what was the impression of British legislators when first Australia signified its willingness to help in South Africa. The reply was that it was felt that the offer was made through sympathy, and there was a feeling of cynicism as to the value of the help proffered. These feelings were soon dispersed when it was found that the soldiers from Australia were equal to the trained troops of Britain, and it was felt that though Britain at the close of the century had no continental allies, she had allies of her own stock and blood in distant parts of the world, and no treaty was necessary to cement the union. The Australians in fighting in South Africa were assisting in splendid work in providing for the peace of the world. He was thankful that he had been enabled to be of some use in public life, and the only reward he wanted was for the people to believe that his actions had been actuated by a desire to benefit the country; and when his time came for dismissal, as it assuredly came to all premiers, he would be satisfied if he got credit for doing his best according to his talents and lights, and if he failed in anything it would not be through want of effort. He was delighted to be with their member, Mr Keast, who had proved a valuable supporter, and had stuck manfully to the government. If the district did not get its share of attention, it would not be their member's fault. All the way out he had been lectured about the Box Hill railway station, and when he arrived he had ocular demonstration of the fact that better accommodation was badly needed. It would not be the fault of their member or himself if the district did not get all it was fairly and justly entitled to. (Applause.) The splendid example set by the district in

erecting a memorial might well be followed by other districts. The least the people could do for those who had fought for them was to say "Thank you." Those who had stayed at home had done very little, compared with those who had left all and risked their lives for the good of all. He was glad to think that in this district all classes had

their lives for the good of all. He was glad to think that in this district all classes had combined to do honor to those to whom honor was due. (Applause.)

Cr Morton proposed the toast of "The federal and state parliaments." Although people differed greatly at election times, they combined as soon as the fight was over, in honoring parliament. This was probably out of recognition to their love of self-government, which Britons were greatly proud of. He could assure the premier there was more than one Tory left in the district. If they differed in politics, they differed in all honesty of purpose. In Victoria the state parliament had shown its loyalty most unmistakably, and if the mother of parliaments followed the example set in Victoria, some of the villification in the old country would be checked.

Mr Balfour, in responding, asked that the federal parliament should not be misjudged, though the benefits of federation had not yet been felt. The federal premier deserved credit for the splendid resolutions lately passed, though he was slow in getting to work about the contingent. The Hon. W. McCulloch also deserved commendation for his spirited action in regard to offering another contingent. Of late the two state houses had been getting along very well, and there need be no friction if a spirit of moderation and give and take were exercised. There was no need of special provisions to prevent deadlocks, but he did not deny that some measure of reform was necessary, to bring the two houses into accord with the position of the state. He advised the premier not to attempt too much next session, but to bring in a small bill of fare. Notwithstanding all that had been written and said about parliamentary inefficiency, he held that the parliamentary system was the best, with party government and a good opposition to prevent the government from getting slovenly and careless. He was satisfied that all measures for the advancement of the people would get hearty support from Box Hill. In conclusion, the speaker spoke highly of Mr Joseph Chamberlain and his splendid policy. Though he had to stand the brunt of most of the abuse, he had come out with flying colors and the empire was proud of him.

Mr Keast also responded. He remarked that if there were only a couple of Tories present, things had changed considerably since some twelve months ago when he was fighting his election and found in Box Hill considerably over 100 Tories. He had kept faith with his constituents, and had endeavored to liven up the electorate. As a new member he did not consider it wise to say too much in the house during the first year, but he did not intend to keep so quiet in future. He had set his heart upon getting a new station for Box Hill, and would not cease worrying the authorities until it was built, for the present one was a standing disgrace, and the place was fairly entitled to a decent railway station. If he had not said much in parliament he had worked hard, as no less than £24,000 had been granted for works in the electorate. He was going to see that his constituents got fair play. Fourteen years ago when the present premier was

see that his constituents got fair play. Fourteen years ago when the present premier was first elected to parliament, he (the speaker) was carting wood to the mines. His father had a vote in Clunes and was barracking for the retiring member, while the speaker was battling for the new candidate, Alick Peacock, whom he was glad to say got in, and had been in parliament ever since. The speaker said the electors had paid him a great compliment in sending him in to support the government, and he was going to do his best in return. He remembered the stormy meeting in Box Hill, and was pleased to say that lately he had got a letter of thanks from their old member, Mr John Keys, whom he had opposed and defeated on political and not personal grounds. He intended to do his best for all the electors, whether they had supported him or not.

Other toasts honored were—"The Army and Navy" (coupled with the names of Major McLaren, Corporal Linsley, Private John-sons and W. Pope, A.B.), proposed by Cr Cox, and responded to by Major McLaren; "The Nunawading council," proposed by Mr A. Rawlings, and responded to by Cr Bishop; "The chairman," proposed by Mr W. Foster, and responded to by President Hunter; "The ladies," proposed by Cr Cox, and "The Press and the Box Hill military band," proposed by Mr S. Collier, and responded to by Mr F. Hodges. Hearty votes of thanks were passed to the ladies, and to the hon. secretary of the memorial fund, Cr Bishop, to whom Mr A. Rawlings and the chairman ascribed the success of the movement. Cr Bishop having "stuck to it like a bull-dog."

The proceedings were enlivened by several selections played by the band, the proceedings terminating with the national anthem.

The ladies deserve special credit for the hospitable manner in which they entertained the company, and supplied the tables, amongst those who assisted prominently being—Mrs Ellingworth, Mrs Fairman, Mrs J. Aspinall, Mrs Boyland and Misses Kefford, Talbett, Cannon, and Aspinall.

In addition to the well-deserved credit given to the hon. secretary, credit is also due to other members of the committee who ably backed up Cr Bishop's efforts. Notably amongst these were President Hunter, Crs Cox, Aspinall, Wilson, Garrett and Morton, and Messrs W. Foster (treasurer), F. G. Richardson, S. Collier, and J. R. Kefford.