

MAJOR THOMAS MITCHELL.

TWO MONUMENTS UNVEILED.

At Nagambie and Mitchellstown.

(BY OUR SPECIAL REPORTER.)

NAGAMBIE, Friday.—With heads bared a group of men, women, and children gathered under the shade of gum trees on the bank of Mitchell Creek to honour the memory of Major Thomas Mitchell, after whom the stream was named. The gathering took place within the boundaries of Mitchellstown. The Historic Memorials Committee has arranged the provision of a number of cairns to mark the routes taken by leading early Victorian explorers. On most of the main highways of the State travellers may now see bluestone or basalt rock cairns bearing a plaque stating that an explorer "passed this way."

Major Mitchell, at the age of 16 years, joined the British Army in the Peninsula wars, and after a distinguished military career came to Australia as assistant surveyor-general of New South Wales. His immediate superior was keenly interested in exploration, and soon after his arrival Mitchell became enthusiastic about the potentialities of the country, about which so little was then known. As soon as it was convenient he set out to explore that part of the continent which is now known as Victoria and which he described as Australia Felix. Following his trips down the Lachlan, Darling, and Murray Rivers, Mitchell made his way across Victoria as far as Portland, retracing his steps to Sydney by way of the north-east, and it was while he was traversing that route that he visited areas on which Benalla, Nagambie, and Yarrawonga have been built.

To honour his memory the president of the Memorials Committee (Sir James Barrett), accompanied by Messrs. C. S. Daley, C. R. Long, H. Hansford, and V. Miller, visited Mitchellstown and Nagambie to-day. Members of the committee expressed pleasure at the manner in which the local committee had worked at Mitchellstown to honour the memory of the founder of their settlement, to which particular interest attaches, because after Mitchell visited Victoria in 1838 several blocks of land half an acre in area and valued at £145 were sold in Sydney. The titles of these blocks of land, now in Mitchellstown, which, unfortunately, now could not command such a price for its land, even for "residential blocks," for which the land was sold.

Major Mitchell in his travels in 1838 visited the site of the now thriving town of Nagambie after he had passed through Mitchellstown. The origin of the name of Nagambie is the subject of conflict between authorities on aboriginal dialect. An enthusiastic committee working under the direction of the head master of the State school (Mr. R. A. Lester) organised an appeal for funds for a monument to the memory of Major Mitchell, and to-day, in a reserve in the main street, school chil-

memory of Major Mitchell, and to-day, in a reserve in the main street, school children and residents gathered around a bluestone monument bearing the inscription "Major Mitchell, explorer, passed here on October 9, 1838." Before the memorial was unveiled by Sir James Barrett, Mr. C. S. Daley remarked upon the foresight shown by Mitchell, who, in those days, had "prophesied" that Victoria, or as it was then known Port Phillip Colony, was suitable for intense cultivation, water being provided from conservation areas on the great river system of the northern districts.