

UNVEILING A CAIRN

At Miga Lake

MAJOR MITCHELL HONORED.

Recently the unveiling ceremony was held at Miga Lake, and the following is a report of the proceedings as published in the last issue of the "West Wimmera Mail."

Cr. Ryan, chairman, said that had met to unveil the cairn erected in honor of Major Mitchell, the great Surveyor-General. The name plate had not yet arrived, but in due course would be placed on the cairn.

Mr. T. H. Schofield, M.H.R., said he was pleased to take part in such an important ceremony. The Historical Society of Victoria was doing wonderful work in having monuments erected in honor of the early explorers. Major Mitchell first set out to disprove Sturt's idea that the River Darling ran into the Murray, but found that Sturt was right. Major Mitchell continued his journey, travelling through Victoria to Portland, where he met the Hentys, who made the first permanent settlement in Victoria. Major Mitchell was an officer in the British army and fought in the Peninsula war; he named places in Australia after towns associated with the battlefield. (Arapiles, for instance, was named after Arapiles — pronounced Ara-pee-leez—where the Major's brother was killed in the battle of Salamanca.) Major Mitchell was born in Scotland, where the most venturesome in the world came from. It had been said there was no gold in the moon because no Scotsman had been there. Major Mitchell had done more to settle inland Victoria than any other explorer. The people of Australia owe a deep debt of gratitude to the explorers who discovered the fertile lands of Australia, and the least they could do was to erect cairns on the route they had taken as tributes to their memory. Major Mitchell had felt an urge to do something, and had done it. He, however, did a foolish thing—he stood

however, did a foolish thing—he stood for Parliament. (Laughter.)

Mr. McNab, representing the Historical Society, said it was a great pleasure to be present to honor Major Mitchell—a great explorer, soldier, writer and botanist—for whom he had great admiration. Major Mitchell set out on an 1800 mile journey with 24 men, bullock waggon, two boats and provisions from Sydney. The expedition travelled up the Darling, across to the Murrumbidgee, then into Victoria. The expedition skirted the Mallee, which Major Mitchell failed to penetrate, describing it as the worst country in the world. He followed the Richardson River to Mount Hope, then south-west to the open plains. Probably he did not give Australia the name Australia Felix until he saw Miga Lake. (Laughter.) Major Mitchell eventually reached the Grampians, which he explored from there saw Mount Arapiles, which he reached via Lubeck, Pine Lake and Quantong on July 22, 1836. From Mt. Arapiles he saw fertile grass country and numerous lakes. He arrived at Miga Lake on July 26 after many trials and tribulations, the waggon becoming bogged every few miles, the expedition covering only five miles a day. The party then journeyed to Portland by way of Harrow and Casterton. Major Mitchell met the Hentys at Portland, where they had been settled for 18 months. The centenary in 1935 will celebrate the 100th anniversary of settlement at Portland. On his return to Sydney the expedition travelled by way of Hamilton, Beaufort, the Pyrenees, Castlemaine, Mount Macedon and the North-East. Mr. McNab concluded by saying that the Miga Lake Cairn was one of 40 erected along the route taken by Major Mitchell, and that it was fitting that the local returned soldiers should have taken a leading part in the erection of the cairn. The Historical Society intended making a tour in 1935 of the route taken by Major Mitchell. Messrs H. G. Hill and F. J. Forster also spoke, congratulating the people of Miga Lake upon their effort to recognise the debt of gratitude the present generation owed to the explorers.

recognize the debt of gratitude the present generation owed to the explorers, particularly to Major Mitchell, who had faced danger and hardship and supplied a lot of valuable information. Mr. Hill said the Migu Lake people had provided an inspiration to the rising generation in courage and determination.

Votes of thanks were accorded the speakers and the chairman.

In connection with the unveiling a sports meeting was held in the afternoon and a poster ball at night. A number of children's races were run off. A sheaf-tossing competition was won by Mr. T. R. Scholfield, with Mr. D. Worthy second.

The ball was very successful, many couples appearing in poster and other fancy dress. Mrs. N. L. Campbell as Harper's Oatmeal gained first prize, and Mr. W. Smith second as Bryant and May in the poster dress competition. First prize for fancy costume was won by Mr. C. Waldron as shiek and second prize by Mr. Trewara and Miss R. Heenan as Spanish Couple.