

## The Soldiers' Monument.

### UNVEILING CEREMONY.

#### SPEECHES BY FEDERAL AND STATE MEMBERS.

Yesterday Echuca witnessed the function of the unveiling of the monument, erected on the square in front of the Supreme Court, in commemoration of the soldiers from Echuca and Moama who volunteered and fought in battles of the Queen and the Empire in the South African war. The ceremony had a tinge of sadness with it, inasmuch as two of those whose names appeared on the panels bearing the inscriptions had departed from this life. Such gallant men are typical of many others who are to be found all over the Empire, prepared to fight for their country, and if necessary sacrifice their lives for it. The erection of something to commemorate the occasion was first mooted as far back as 1902. In June of that year the coronation celebrations were held, and it was found that after providing for all expenses, a surplus of £4 2s 4d remained. A meeting of the committee was subsequently held for the purpose of dealing with the balance, and on the suggestion of the then Mayor (Cr. B. R. Wilson), who was chairman of the committee, the amount was unanimously voted as a nucleus of a fund for a tablet which it was proposed to erect in the Town Hall. It was urged that the necessary amount be collected by public subscription, and the ladies who so materially assisted in the coronation celebrations undertook the work of collecting. Mr. Hart Hicks was appointed secretary to the movement, and Mr. D. Cameron treasurer. Although, however, a systematic canvas was made, and the ladies worked hard and often, a sum of £13 only was the result of their labors. An appeal was then made through the columns of the RIVERINE HERALD, and subsequently to the Parliamentary representatives, who, it must be said, responded liberally. The idea of holding a sacred concert in Victoria Park was mooted by the committee, and eventually carried into effect, with the pleasing result that the fund was further increased by £26. At this stage, however, the matter remained for some considerable time, when Cr. Wilson, recognising the great success that attended the military sports held in Bendigo in the latter part of last year, in aid of the fallen soldiers' memorial, proposed to be erected in that city, suggested the holding of a similar gathering in Echuca, in aid of the local fund. The idea was considered an excellent one, and an energetic committee, with Cr. Wilson at its head and Sergeant H. Kerans as secretary, set to work with the preliminary arrangements. After the Defence department had granted the necessary permission for the holding of the gathering, the tournament was carried out in Victoria Park oval on 15th March last. The result was beyond the most sanguine expectations, the gate takings amounting to £49 12s. A concert held in the evening realised a further £16, and the movement resulted in a net sum of £31 11s being raised. This satisfactory result placed the project beyond all possible doubt, and allowed the committee to launch out and erect the fine monument, at a total cost of £45, that was yesterday unveiled.

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the proceedings opened at about 3 o'clock with a procession, comprising the Second Battalion band, E. Company Rangers, Federal band, and local corps of cadets. Mounted-Constable Morrison led the way, the route of march being along High-street to Pakenham-street, down Hare-street to Heygarth-street, thence along High-street to the Supreme Court square. Captain Warren was in command of the parade. Lieutenant Ponsford had charge of the Rangers, and Lieutenant Taylor the school cadets. The regimental band was under the lead of Drum-Major Esnouff, and Mr. A. Manger filled a similar position in regard to the Federal band. On arrival at the square the men were halted, and drawn up in front of the monument, where a temporary stand had been erected for the convenience of a number of invited citizens. Those on the platform were the Mayor (Cr. P. J. O'Bryan), Crs. Wilson, Moore, Cunningham, White, Reid, and Mr. D. Cameron (town clerk), of the Borough Council; Aldermen Martin, Bowtell, Eddy, and Mr. C. L. Blair (council clerk), Moama Municipal Council; Mr. H. M'Kenzie, M.L.A., Mr. J. M. Chanter, M.H.R., Captain E. Robert Warren (V. Rangers), Dr. Eakins, and Mr. W. J. Boyle, an ex-councillor of the Borough of Echuca. There were about 1500 spectators, including many old pioneers, who had lived in the town for the past 40 years and upwards.

Cr. B. R. Wilson, chairman of the monument committee, presided. He explained that they had assembled there that day to unveil a little monument that had been erected to record the services of those who went to South Africa to fight in the interests of the Empire. These men were not feather-bed soldiers, neither were they stay-at-homes, but were fired with the same spirit as the soldiers who won Balaklava and Waterloo. (Cheers.) Their hearts throbbed to the great heart beats of the mother nation, and they went forward prepared to die for the Empire. It was, therefore, their duty to have some recording stone, so that the services of the men might not fall into oblivion. With that view the memorial had been erected. (Cheers.)

Captain Warren said it afforded him very great pleasure indeed to have the honor of unveiling and presenting the memorial monument to the people of Echuca. He was sorry that it was not being done by one of the citizens of the town. It was almost needless for him to follow Mr Wilson when he said that the memorial was a well deserved one. May it long serve to remind them of the soldiers who went to South Africa—to those sons of Echuca who left their homes to assist the Empire and endured the hardships of a campaign—those men who are ever ready to face battle, and shed their blood, if needs be, in the Empire's cause. (Loud cheers.) The monument would also serve to remind them that two of those whose names appeared on the panels had passed from their midst. He referred to the late Captain Wilson and Private Kerans. They did their duty nobly, and long may the memorial serve to keep them and their heroic deeds in the memory of the people of Echuca. (Cheers.) In conclusion he trusted the monument would be a lasting recognition of the soldiers whose names were engraved upon it, and their unflinching courage during the South African campaign. (Hear, hear.) The monument was then uncovered, the general salute was sounded, and the band played the National Anthem. Captain Warren then handed over the monument to the Mayor for presentation to the citizens of Echuca.

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The Mayor said he had very great pleasure in accepting the splendid memorial which had that day been unveiled as a lasting tribute to the soldiers who left Echuca and Moama to represent them in South Africa. He desired to heartily thank the chairman and all connected with the committee for the excellent arrangements made and those who carried out the contract for the erection of the monument. It was needless for him to tell them of the part that had been taken in connection with the sending away and reception on their return of those whose names were engraved on the panels. The time was also fresh in their memory when that which most concerned us was our soldiers and our rights in another country. He desired to express his sorrow at the loss of two of those who represented us in that critical time, and to sympathise with their relatives. He trusted that the monument would be a fitting memento of those who had fought in South Africa, and that by its erection the young people of the town would endeavor to emulate those whose names were inscribed thereon.

Alderman Martin (Moama council) apologised for the absence of the Mayor of the municipality, whose business had that day

prevented his attendance. He desired to thank the citizens of Echuca for the invitation extended to the Moama representatives. Although they lived across the border the people there always took an active part in anything pertaining to the welfare of the country in which they lived. Moama had always been hand in hand with Echuca to show its sympathy with the mother land when occasion arose. He trusted the monument would ever serve to remind the people of those men who fought for the Empire in the South African war.

Ex-Cr. Boyle said it afforded him great pleasure at being present to express his gratitude to those men who went to South Africa to represent this young country. He was one of the committee who had endeavored to have the monument erected, and he felt grateful to the citizens of Echuca who responded to the appeal made. It had been said that the Australian natives would be in favor of republicanism. Was there ever such a libel perpetrated on the people of this continent? They always felt that the old English Empire was the greatest and noblest of all the nations of the world. He would like also to refer to the niggardliness of the way in which the Federal Parliament supported the navy. To his mind there was no tax that should be so strongly supported as that of the navy, the amount for which ought to be double that now voted.

Mr H. M'Kenzie, M.L.A., congratulated the people of the district for perpetuating the names of those men who came to the Empire's rescue when their services were required. The stability of a nation always depended upon the patriotism of the people, but the moment that patriotism ceased the nation commenced to fade. He could not help referring to a publication in one of the States which took every opportunity of belittling every one who served their country on the field of battle. Such conduct had a bad effect on the young generation. It was now two years since the war ended, but the journal still indulged in that slandering,

now two years since the war ended, but the journal still indulged in that slandering, sneering manner in regard to those brave men. It was time that sort of language ceased—should in fact be made to cease. It only meant that a combination should give the publisher or proprietor notice that the sneering, slandering way in which reference had been made to the men, whether the war was just or unjust, had nothing to do with him, and give him reasonable time to discontinue publishing such statements. There was a way to do it in other countries. If the practice was not discontinued they should call on him some morning and dip him in a horse trough. (Loud cheers and laughter.) He regretted that since the order had been given for the erection of the monument two whose names were inscribed on the panels had joined the great majority—one who was a native of the town, and a man who was much attached to his aged mother, and who always thought of her when far away on the field of battle; the other, the brother of our worthy chairman, whose death was not reported to his relatives until some two months after the sad event had taken place. Even now the particulars were not to hand. He died away from friends and countrymen—in a strange land, among strange people, where he could not even speak the language of the inhabitants—away in the French island of Madagascar. It was very sad indeed, and he trusted the Great Power would reward such a man. He again congratulated the people of the district on the erection of such a splendid memorial, and thanked those present for turning out in such large numbers to witness the unveiling ceremony. He expressed the hope that it would be years before they would be called upon to draw a black line under the names of any of those that were inscribed on the monument [that had that day been unveiled. (Hear, hear.)

Mr J. M. Chanter, M.H.R., congratulated the people on their attendance to mark what must be considered an epoch in the history of Echuca. The sending away of so many bright young men to assist the Empire in the time of need—although practically it was not a time of need—marked a line in the world that old England had been forming, and showed that her children would come to her rescue when the bugle called. Did we recognise what this meant? We know that the poet has said, "Breathes there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself hath said 'this is my own, my native land.'" We do not recognise that we are citizens only of Victoria and New South Wales, but we do recognise the fact that we are units of the empire—the greatest empire that the world has ever seen. (Cheers). Proceeding, Mr Chanter said he did not think the publication alluded to by Mr M'Kenzie did any harm, as the people were too patriotic to take notice of such statements. Those who fought for their country deserved all the recognition they had received. That feeling of recognition towards those who braved the dangers of battle, and fell fighting for their country's cause, in order to uphold the grand old flag under which we sailed would ever remain uppermost in our hearts. Never would he forget some years ago when the then Governor of New South Wales—Lord Carrington—paid a visit to this district, and to the district he (the speaker) then represented in the State of New South Wales. The Governor was of course taken in hand by the aristocracy. A ball was given in Deniliquin, and there was one individual there, in a humble position, who wanted an introduction. He (Mr Chanter) might

introduction. He (Mr Chanter) might tell them the man was Governor of the Deniliquin gaol. An effort was made to put the man aside, as some of those who attended the dance had their own reasons for not wanting him to associate with them. Shortly afterwards, however, Lord Carrington cast his eyes upon the man and walked up to him at the salute. The people wondered why a Governor representing the great British Crown should take notice of so humble an individual. It was noticed that the man wore the Victoria Cross. (Loud cheers.) He had fought in the wars of England with conspicuous bravery, and that bravery had been recognised. (Hear, hear.) He hoped that the monument unveiled that day would ever impress those of our civilians, that it would be a lasting memory of the brave men who defended the Empire in time of need, and that their names would ever be inscribed on the hearts of the people. Did they recognise what it meant? These men left their homes, their relatives and their friends to brave the dangers of shot and shell and climatic conditions. They braved all these things on the veldt of South Africa in the Empire's cause. Their's was not to consider the justice of the war or otherwise. "Their's was not to reason why, their's was but to do or die." Proceeding, Mr Chanter said he was deeply sorry that two of those from Echuca who went through the campaign had since passed away; one had died in this town, respected and honored; the other in a foreign land. Referring to the niggardliness of the Commonwealth Parliament mentioned by Mr Boyle, Mr Chanter said he recognised that the navy was the first line of defence, but they were not in a position, from a financial point of view, to build a navy on the lines of the old mother land, towards which we contributed £200,000 per annum, which was as much as Parliament could afford to vote. It was hoped, however, when their position became more prosperous, the Commonwealth would be able to contribute a greater amount. They had shown to the motherland that they were at all times ready and willing to assist in the defence of our shores, and they also recognised the fact that the mother country would at all times assist us by her navy if ever the occasion demanded. (Cheers).

The Mayor proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the committee and all who had assisted in that day's celebration, to which Mr

Wilson is surmounted with a cast-iron lamp. Around this is a kerbing of brick and cement, rounded on the top and finely cemented, with a wrought iron railing mounted on same. It was designed and erected by Messrs W. W. Moore and Sons, Echuca, and reflects much credit on the firm. One inscription reads:—"Presented by the residents to the Borough Council to commemorate the services of our citizen soldiers in the South African war, 1899-01." The following names are inscribed:—Captain C. J. Wilson, Sergeants J. H. Rule, H. A. Kerans, W. K. Grady, Corporals R. M'Grouther, T. Pitt, Privates S. Kerans, C. T. Earnshaw, E. Earnshaw, Troopers R. Jordan, D. Jordan, G. Howell, J. P. Toner, R. Smith, E. A. Philp, J. M. Davey, D. M'Pherson, B. Rofs, A. Tulloch, R. C. Bell, W. H. Wallis, J. M. Whidburn, J. C. Chanter, A. Fortescue, W. H. Turner, W. Parr, W. Collins, and W. J. Lawton.

Wilson briefly replied, and in the course of his remarks specially referred to the valuable assistance rendered by the ladies. He also took the opportunity of presenting a gold medal to the secretary of the movement, Mr Hart Hicks, who had done yeoman service. Mr Hicks acknowledged the gift in a few well chosen sentences. The medal bore the following inscription:—"Presented to Hart Hicks from Soldiers' Memorial Committee, June 7/05, for valuable services rendered." Three cheers were then given for the King, and the band played the National Anthem. During the ceremony both bands played patriotic airs.

The monument, which was inspected by those present, is constructed of finely rubbed Malsbury bluestone, mounted on a base of brick, built in cement, and cemented on all facings. Marble panels are set into the bluestone die, on the faces of which contain the names of those who fought for the empire in the South African war. The memorial is surmounted with a cast-iron lamp. Around this is a kerbing of brick and