

LEARMONTH HONOR AVENUE

A.N.A. SCHEME.

PLANTING DAY.

Learmonth, Monday.

The planting of an honor plantation by the Learmonth branch of the A.N.A. was carried out on Saturday afternoon, in honor of the past and present members of the association on active service. A month ago the branch received the consent and assistance of the Ballarat Shire Council, to fence in 24 chains of the west side of the main road leading from the North Learmonth Railway Station to Waubara, and since then the members have completed financial arrangements and prepared 254 holes for tree-planting. The trees were secured through the kindness of the Premier from the State Nursery, and were of varied kinds, and though somewhat on the small side should do well in where they are planted. Owing to some bungle on the part of the railway authorities the trees which were consigned from Creswick on Thursday morning did not reach Learmonth on Friday night. On enquiries being made it was found that they were left at the Ballarat station, hence the branch were put to the extra cost of having to make the trip to Ballarat on Saturday morning in order to have them sorted and in readiness for planting. So complete were the arrangements that within one hour after the planting of the first tree the whole plantation was completed. The gathering was the largest and most representative that has been seen in Learmonth for years. Amongst the gathering the following were present:—The Premier (Sir A. J. Peacock) and Lady Peacock and party, the Hon. A. Bell, M.L.C., representing the Ballarat City Council; Mr E. D. Wilcox, vice-president of the board of directors of the A.N.A.; the Mayor and councillors of Clunes, Mayor and Councillors of Creswick, President of the Lexton Shire Council and Cr J. G. Robertson; president and representatives of Ballarat City, Ballarat East, Newington, and Windermere A.N.A. branches; Mrs Thompson and party, representing Lucas and Co., and Major C. A. Courtney. The president of the branch (Mr C. H. Medwell) on opening the proceedings, said he was extremely pleased to see present such a large and representative gathering to do them honor in the carrying out of their plantation in honor of the past and present members of their branch who were on active service. The plantation would be a living monument to those brave lads who had left our shores to fight for freedom, and also to the unreturning brave who had already shed their blood and paid the supreme sacrifice. The branch from year to year would continue to guard and im-

prove the plantation they had laid out in honor of their members, and so keep ever green the memory of the noble sacrifices they had made. (Applause.) The National Anthem was then sung, and the Premier, who was received with loud applause, said he was delighted at the action which the branch had taken in honoring their members. The plantation would be a living monument and an adornment to the place. The first tree was planted by Lady Peacock. In a neat speech Lady Peacock also complimented the branch on their action. The Premier planted the next tree, the vice-president of the board planted a wattle, and told the branch to put a guard around it and charge the cost to him. The President of the Shire of Ballarat continued the planting, and thence on the various public men and representatives present took an active and interested part in the planting. Mrs Thompson and party planted 11 trees, and asked that the names of the members at the war be forwarded to the former, so that they could write to them and tell them that they too had taken part with the Learmonth branch in doing them honor. One of the most pleasing features of the day was the interest taken in the planting by the old pioneers of the district of the section allotted to them. Immediately after the conclusion of the planting the gathering adjourned to the Mechanics' Institute, where the lady friends of the branch had tables laid out for refreshments, and their deserve the greatest of praise for the manner in which they catered for the large gathering. Owing to in-

sufficient seating accommodation in the hall a large number were unable to gain admission. After ample justice had been done to the splendid repast provided, and the National Anthem had been sung, the chairman called upon Mr A. Patterson to propose the toast of "Our Boys at the Front." In doing so he said that no words of his could add praise enough to the deeds that these brave boys of ours had done. They needed to perpetuate in some manner their appreciation of the sacrifices they were making. The work carried out that day would be a living monument to their memory. He was pleased to see such a representative gathering present. He hoped that the A.N.A. would some day build a national monument to perpetuate the deeds of their members who had risked their lives for the grand old Empire. Major C. A. Courtney responded. He congratulated the speaker on the able manner in which he had proposed the toast. He was extremely pleased to be present and pleased to congratulate the A.N.A. on the action they had taken. The fighting spirit of the lads at the front had been inspired by the

at the front had been inspired by the manner in which the people here were working in their honor. Any man who could go and did not go and fight missed a great education of soul and character. The men at the front were of an excellent type. To him the planting was invested with special interest, for that very ground where the branch had made their plantation was the ground on which the members of the 8th Light Horse on active service received most of their drinking. He thanked them for the manner in which the toast had been proposed and received.

Lieut. Smith, recruiting officer for the shire, delivered an eloquent address on the necessity of supplying the boys at the front with reinforcements.

The toast of "The A.N.A." was proposed by Mr P. Casey, who said he was pleased to see present the vice-president of the board of directors. The board had done splendid work in keeping good on the books those of their members who were on active service, and the branches would not now cavil at the levy struck by the board on members for that purpose. He was pleased to see the Premier present. No one had worked harder for the district than Sir Alexander Peacock, and he trusted he would long be spared to represent them. Mr E. D. Wilcox (vice-president of the board), in responding, said that he had never attended a more memorable function than the one they were celebrating that day. He was pleased to see present such a representative gathering, and congratulated the Learmouth branch on their action and the manner in which they had carried out the work. When those boys of ours left our shores they would not be troubled with contributions, and since the start of the war the board had paid £12,000 to keep these men financial on the coals, and now that they had been compelled to strike a levy on all members to continue doing this, he was proud to say that there was not one dissentient branch amongst the 250. He dealt at length with the question of repatriation for the men who were on active service, and trusted that the branches would also take the matter up at their meetings. He apologised for the absence of the Chief President.

"The State Parliament" was proposed by Cr J. Baird (president of the Ballarat Shire), who eulogised the good work done by their representative, the Premier. He hoped he would be successful in defeating the present no-confidence motion, as he was with the previous one. He was not pleased with some of the taxation proposals, and thought that all excessive expenditure should be cut down.

The Premier, on rising, was received with loud applause. He heartily congratulated the president and committee of the A.N.A. on their action, and he

discussed the president and committee of the A.N.A. on their action, and he could tell them that the work done that day was not only an honor to their brave lads, but was of a useful character in educating our people in tree-planting. We were in the habit of importing some millions of pounds' worth of timber per annum. Part of the State Forest at Creswick was now bringing in £120 per acre. Public opinion was now becoming educated. He was being attacked on all sides, and even sniped at from behind, in connection with his taxation proposals, but God had been good to him, and he would fight. The problems that confronted them would be big and grave. He would not put on more taxation if it were not necessary. The railways had to be financed. He knew the increasing of charges would touch the producer, but they had to do it. It now cost the Government £206,000 more for coal, and £108,000 more for wages than they had to pay before. They had now to pay the insurance of the men at the front; £142,000 more had to be paid for interest on loans converted. The abnormal conditions prevailing had made it necessary to

increase the charges. During the drought year his Government had assisted the farmers to the extent of £1,429,000. Some said why did they not close the High Schools? He would not do that and deprive the boys and girls of their education. He was to have been present at a demonstration that day in Melbourne, but could not miss the opportunity of being present to take part in the work they had done that day.

The toast of "The Visitors" was proposed by Mr Wm. Rain, and responded to by Mr T. Paul (secretary Ballarat East A.N.A.), and Mr Nicholson (Newington A.N.A.), and others. Songs were rendered between the speeches by Mr Frank Cox and Mr G. W. Reed. At night a dance was held, and during an interval an ex-president's certificate was presented to Mr G. L. Medwell on behalf of the branch by Mr E. D. Wilcox.