

SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL.

UNVEILING CEREMONY AT NEERIM SOUTH.

GRANITE MONUMENT IN HONOR OF THE FALLEN.

In no part of this great Commonwealth, particularly the Gippsland portion of Victoria, has greater loyalty been shown towards our soldiers than in this district. In all quarters festivities—some of a lavish nature—have been arranged for the welcome home of "our valiant warriors," and also for the remembrance of those who fell in the great conflict.

The residents of Neerim South had "their day" last Wednesday, when the unveiling ceremony of a fine granite monument on which was inscribed in gold letters the names of the absent heroes, was performed by the State Commandant, Brigadier-General C. H. Brand, C.P., C.M.G., D.S.O., who had been invited to attend.

Unfortunately, wet weather prevailed, which somewhat marred the proceedings, and portion of the set programme had to be abandoned. In the earlier portion of the proceedings the rain was of a light nature, but later on it descended with such violence as to cause a termination of the proceedings much earlier than had been arranged. The township honored the heroes by flying their flags at half-mast in respect to the fallen.

On the arrival at Neerim South of the special train from Warragul containing the Citizens' Brass Band and excursionists, the returned men of the Neerim district (between 50 and 60) fell in, and were inspected by the Brigadier-General. A procession was then formed of the soldiers, school children and residents, and headed by the Band playing a good marching selection, the whole assemblage wended their way to the monument, which is erected on the junction of the roads opposite the Coffee Palace. On arrival there a semi-circle was formed, when the Band appropriately played "O, God, our help in ages past."

The President of the committee, Rev. R. H. Hobbs, opened the proceed-

ings, and remarked that their assemblage that day was a memorable one, and all looked back with feelings of pride to the noble deeds performed by the Australian soldiers on the battle fields of Europe. They were assembled that day in honor of those who had fallen in the great conflict. The achievements of the Australians could never be surpassed. Although the names inscribed on the monument were not numerous, they meant much. Those men had undertaken immense responsibilities, and they were a part of the 60,000 Australians who had laid down their lives on the various battle fronts. Some were very young when they went forth to uphold right, but they had shown a great love for their homeland in taking up arms. The rev. gentleman then called on Jean Davidson to recite "In Memory," and Olga Gafney followed with "Anzac," both pieces being admirably rendered.

Brigadier-General Brand, on stepping forward, was given a hearty welcome. He said that on an average he had been performing similar functions to commemorate the fallen twice a week; whilst last week he had the honor of attending six functions. It was a great honor to him to do all he could. Our boys had gone forth with no expectations of reward, which stamped them as "chips of the old block." He paid a glowing tribute to the bravery and gallantry of the Australian boys. The General laid great stress on the fact that should here happen to be a "black sheep" here and there the people for whom he had fought should not turn him down. A farmer did not condemn his flock of sheep should there be a few black ones amongst them. He could tell them that the men of the A.I.F. had faced enormous difficulties, but despite all that, they never shirked their duties. (Cheers.) No matter how hard pressed they were, or up against fearful odds, they had always made light of the situation. Those men who four years ago had landed at Gallipoli had shown great endurance and ability. He related several amusing incidents at the front. It was such jollity that had helped them to withstand the terrific wintry conditions. Amidst loud applause he remarked that the Aus-

wintery conditions. Amidst loud applause he remarked that the Australians had few equals, and no superiors, in the world. They were never found wanting. He extended his deepest sympathy to the relatives of the fallen. Pointing to the monument, he said, "Those men more than risked their lives; they gave their lives." Whilst the General unveiled the monument, displaying the names of the fallen heroes, the whole assemblage stood in silence for two minutes with bared heads. Then Bandmaster Burke solemnly sounded "The Last Post."

Whilst the Band rendered a selection several wreaths were placed at the foot of the monument, and the whole scene was as touching as it was impressive, and never to be forgotten.

The monument stands about 20 feet high, and consists of four tiers of granite, and on it appears the following inscription cut into the everlasting granite:—

"Erected to the memory of
the men from this district
who made the supreme sacrifice
in the great war,
1914-1919.

Sergt. W. E. STEPHENS
Cpl. C. McCULLOCH
Bdr. P. J. MILNER
Dvr. W. C. FAIRWEATHER
Pte. A. V. COE
Pte. C. COE
Pte. W. E. EMERY
Pte. A. H. FRASER
Pte. B. H. HODGE
Pte. J. HUTCHINSON
Pte. O. RASSMUSEN
Pte. T. RAEBURN
Pte. A. P. SAWYER
Pte. T. H. UNWIN
Pte. R. B. WHARION
Pte. L. ANDERSON

In the unavoidable absence of the President of the Shire of Buln Buln, Cr. Casey considered it a great honor to be privileged to say a few words. The boys had done their duty for liberty and the freedom of the civilised world. "The constant drip of water and the rain of the elements may wear away the hardest stone," but the deeds of the boys would live for ever. The people should always think of them, even in their prayers. The boys had done their part nobly and well. Now it was the people's duty to do theirs. It was the least the people could do

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for them. The boys had been called away from the plough and the bush of Gippsland, with no military training previous to enlisting. No army in the world stood up to the enemy like the Australians. (Hear, hear.) He was pleased to know the boys admired General Brand; their remarks that he had given them a "linkum go" meant much.

The children then sang "The Recessional" in an impressive manner, after which Cr. Algie spoke in appreciative terms of the Australian soldiers. Unfortunately rain came on heavily, and a retreat was made for shelter. The majority made their way to the hall, where light refreshments were partaken of.

The officers and committee of the memorable function were:— President, Rev. H. B. Hobbs; hon. secretary, Mr. B. C. Hipworth; hon. treasurer, Mr. J. A. Tucker; committee, Messrs. F. Burns, W. Gaffney, T. Hayden, W. Lane, E. G. Logan, A. McKenzie, B. Swaffield, W. Stephens and J. G. Tyssen.

After the stormy conditions had abated, the Band rendered several selections in front of the hall, and their efforts were highly appreciated. Thus ended the most memorable day in the history of Neerim South, whose people have given tangible expression to their gratitude and admiration of the valor of their sons by the erection of this imperishable granite monument to their honor and memory.