

NEW PUBLIC HALL

At Nambucca Heads

Official Opening of School of Arts

It is our pleasurable duty to heartily congratulate Nambucca Heads upon possessing such a splendid building as the newly-erected School of Arts, which was opened last Monday in the presence of a large number of representative residents from all parts of this district. Some time ago misgivings were expressed here and there as to the justification of such expenditure seeing that a capacious dance-hall had been erected on the Headland Reserve; but the School of Arts Committee justifiably believed that Nambucca Heads must go ahead, and they decided to march with progressive step. The result is that they have erected a building of which they should be proud, and proved themselves worthy of highest commendation, and posterity will acknowledge that they were wise in their day and generation.

The proceedings at the main entrance to the new building commenced with the National Anthem.

The first speaker was Mr. C. S. Williams, who as President of the School of Arts Committee, expressed his great pleasure at seeing so many citizens gathered to witness the opening ceremony. This event, he said, was the culmination of efforts lasting two years, during which those interested had met with many

trials lasting two years, during which those interested had met with many trials and setbacks. Now, however, they had a building that the Committee hoped would be appreciated. Some forty years ago, continued Mr. Williams, the first School of Arts structure on the present site was established at a cost of £19. Small additions were made from time to time until in 1938 they had a decent building, but to it 'bits 'nau' been put on here and there. Then came the fire and they were left with £1410. To build the desired structure that sum was inadequate, and many avenues of finance were explored in efforts to obtain more money. This problem was settled by two offers of £1000 loans, one of which was accepted. For fear of forgetting someone who may have done good work, the President said he did not wish to mention by name all those who had assisted the project, but he must say that no one could deny the great efforts of the Secretary, Mr. Fred Davis. (Applause). And thanks were also specially due to the contractor, Mr. McNiven. In conclusion, Mr. Williams thanked all present for their attendance, and hoped the new School of Arts would meet with general approval.

After apologising for the absence of Sir Earle Page and Hon. D. H. Drummond, who had intended being present, Hon. R. S. Vincent congratulated the community on the consummation of their hopes and aspirations in regard to the new School of Arts. He knew the interested people had passed through troubled waters in the two years they had been trying to erect a new building on the ashes of the institute that had served its purpose for 40 years, and in which the community life of the area had evolved during those years. The Minister went on to describe how the history of civilisation could be read in the civic buildings of the past. Even to-day in the Libyan Desert remarkable buildings were being unearthed, indicating that a high standard of civilisation existed at the time. Egypt was a

that a high standard of civilisation existed at the time. Egypt was a notable example of the monuments constituted by public buildings. Coming nearer home, England provided many historical buildings in which the destiny of Britain and the Empire had been shaped. In Australia, too, could be found many beautiful and historic buildings, and in the older country towns one could see buildings, though architecturally out of date, designed to stand the tests of time. Here at Nambucca Heads they had a fine building modernly equipped to make easier the work and deliberations of the people hereabouts. Also this hall would be the scene of social festivities so necessary in town life. No doubt, said Mr. Vincent, several older residents present that day could remember the first hall—and probably the opening ball; well, that night they could witness a similar function. This attractive and substantial building should last for many years, and he hoped the people would guard it as their own, be proud of it, and avoid any factional feeling that might have a reflection on the new School of Arts.

Cr. C. R. Jarvis (Shire President) said he had not come along to usurp any credit for the Council, for it had very little to do with this building because it was beyond the Council's ambit. Still he did want to assure those interested that Council had done its best, and it was perhaps worth recalling that the first plans submitted in connection with the School of Arts were returned by the Council with the advice that they were not ambitious enough. Now they had gone in for something that would be a credit to the town, and in accordance with the sensible idea to build for posterity. The Council was pleased to see established this fine building, reflecting the growth of the Shire. Further evidence of the Shire's development would be provided by the two new bridges at Wilson and Congarinni, the Abattoirs, and new Shire Chambers, all to be opened in the near

the Abattoirs, and new Shire Chambers, all to be opened in the near future. All these improvements lent substance to the caption on the Shire seal—"Floreat Nambucca," or in other words "flourishing Nambucca." Cr. Jarvis added his congratulations to all concerned in the establishment of the new School of Arts.

Cr. A. G. Henderson, whom the Chairman introduced as "our Shire representative," returned thanks for the invitation to be present. He said he recognised when he went into the Council that the district would prosper, and this building was an indication of that growth and of the people's civic pride. The Council would have liked to help in the achievement, but was unable to provide loan/subsidy money from the

Department of Local Government, which at the time was upset by the circumstances connected with the resignation of Mr. Spooner as Minister for Local Government. Referring to the new building, Cr. Henderson declared that it compared favorably with anything of its kind on the North Coast. Nambucca Heads was a very progressive part of the Shire, and much of its growth was due to the fact that it had good roads leading to it. The town had also been fortunate to share in the electricity service, which had been fathered by Mr. Vincent and Sir Earle Page. The speaker congratulated one and all—the Committee, Trustees, helpers—for their splendid efforts in connection with this fine new hall.

Mr. Robert Beer (President of the Trustees) remarked that the Chairman of the Committee had been modest in his observations, and the speaker would like to describe briefly what had transpired. On the old School of Arts they had a fine body of citizens always seeking to improve and maintain the building. Local

and maintain the building. Local people had lent money for improvements from time to time, and every penny was paid back. The old School of Arts was free of debt, thanks to the foresight and enthusiasm of men like the late H. O. Ellis and Mr. Meyers. The building and assets were worth £2010, but were only insured for £1410. The Committee, in seeking to build a new hall, met many difficulties. They wanted to spend £4000, but eventually called for designs to cost £2000, and offered a ten-guinea prize; this was won by Mr. Les Allen (of Vaucluse), whose suggestions were now embodied in the building in front of the gathering. Mr. McNiven had erected a building that would give him a good name wherever he went. The Committee was casting about for extra money, and were thankful when a very good friend advanced £1000 loan. The Nambucca Shire Council also deserved thanks, for their action had made possible the cement footpath at the entrance to the institute. Again emphasising the parts played by the old pioneers, Mr. Beer concluded feelingly with the quotation—"Lives of great men all remind us

We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us

Footprints in the sands of time."

Mr. McNiven jocularly remarked that he did not see anything in the specifications about making a speech, but presumed it could be a "legitimate extra." His men and himself had done their best, and he hoped the structure would uphold the dignity of the functions for which it was intended. Before coming to construct the building, Nambucca Heads was only a name to him, but he was now certain that the town as a pleasure resort had a marvellous future, and he believed it would continue to expand—so much so, he hoped, that in about 15 years he could have the pleasure of putting up a larger building.

Mr. Fred Davis (the Secretary) said it was very nice to see people

said it was very nice to see people appreciate what had been done, but he could not possibly have done the work on his own, and so he thanked all who had helped in any way. He also thanked Mr. McNiven for his help and good advice "right through the piece."

Mr. Williams announced the receipt of a number of apologies. He said he would like to mention that it was intended to restore the Library, for which they had the 800 books saved from the fire. The Committee would very much appreciate any books that could be donated.

Dedicating the building "to the community of Nambucca Heads," Mr. Vincent unveiled the tablet near the main entrance. The inscription reads: "This tablet was unveiled to commemorate the opening of this building by the Hon. R. S. Vincent, M.L.A., Minister for Mines and Forests, March 11, 1940."

Having received the key from the President, Mr. Vincent was then applauded as he performed the official act of unlocking and opening the main door and thus admitting the crowd which quite evidently felt that the interior was as pleasing to the eye as the exterior.

A flag was opened out in the foyer and into it quite a handsome sum was received in donations.

The invited guests were treated by the Committee to afternoon tea in the new supper room behind the stage, the management of this department being in the capable and willing hands of the ladies.

The members of the School of Arts Committee, who will be able to "look back" with complete satisfaction upon their association with the establishment of the new edifice, include the following: Mrs. R. McPherson, Mrs. S. Derrett, Mrs. L. B. Argent, Miss D. Ellis, Messrs. C. S. Williams (President), F. Davis (Secretary), A. Egginton (Treasurer), L. Heber, A. Hill, W. T. White, B. Fletcher, N. Taylor.

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