

Henty Memorial

On Monday afternoon the Henty Memorial was unveiled by Hon. D. S. Oman, Minister of Lands. The monument is an imposing structure standing on a prominent site overlooking the town on what is known as The Bluff. It consists of a granite column about 20 feet high, and the foundation—which was laid by the Major (Cr W. J. Williamson) in 1914, and left unfinished on account of the war—is of brick. A tablet on each side of the square column bears an inscription to notable pioneers. On the west side the inscription is—"In commemoration of the first settlement of Victoria at Portland by Edward Henty, November 19, 1834, and of Stephen George, Francis and John Henty." On the east—"In commemoration of the discovery and naming of Portland Bay by Lieut. James Grant in H.M. brig Lady Nelson, December 5, 1800." The north side—"In commemoration of the meeting of Major Thomas Mitchell and the Henty brothers near this spot, 29th August, 1836." The south—"In memory of Captain William Dutton, Master Mariner, the first white man to visit Portland Bay, December, 1828." The monumental work was carried out by Mr W. Dale, of Casterton, on whom it reflects great credit.

A very large assembly witnessed the unveiling ceremony. On a specially erected platform at the foot of the monument sat the Mayor and Mayoress, Hon. and Mrs D. S. Oman, Mr and Mrs W. E. Thomas, and Mr Brammer (president of the National Roads Association).

Mr Oman, who was formally introduced by the Mayor, first apologised for the absence of the Premier, who was prevented from attending through important Parliamentary business. He would dearly have liked to have been here, as he was an old Portland boy and held many cherished associations. The Minister then expressed pleasure at the privilege of performing the ceremony, and proceeded to outline the history of the Hentys. He said that three of the brothers turned their eyes to Western Australia and took up 2,000 acres of land in 1829. When, however, they came to cultivate it, they found the soil barren and useless. They then looked further afield, and advising their father that they had been unsuccessful, turned to Tasmania. There the father and another brother joined them. Again they met with disappointment, missing their opportunity for land owing to the alteration of the law, and in 1834 Edward Henty, who had previously examined the southern coast line of Australia, determined that Portland Bay was suitable for the founding of a settlement, and

for the founding of a settlement, and he landed there, just 88 years ago, at the

very spot where they had witnessed the pageant that day. Now they could look back over that period and realise the work that those hardy men had accomplished. They came here with cattle and working bullocks—the only means of conveyance in those days—and had to contend with every inconvenience imaginable. As administrator of land settlement in Victoria he heard many complaints as to bad roads, which made him wonder why. There was a time in the Western District in '66 when neither roads nor fences existed, and it was many years later before even coaches were introduced. They could well imagine the difficulties when this settlement was first established. Those pioneers were looked upon then as trespassers, and were a Government to themselves. They had to contest their rights, and it was only with great difficulty that titles for their land were secured. It was not till 1840 that any land was offered for sale. The first sold brought £551 an acre in the suburban area, and another £64 an acre, while 260 acres realised £117/ per acre. Altogether the sum of £13,000 resulted from the sale. Whatever value that land possessed was due to the Hentys and the noble band of men and women of those early days. We had only to look about to-day to see the band of the pioneers. There were one and a half millions of people at present in this State, and who would care to forecast what 88 years would mean in this fertile land? The Hentys had to rely on their own resources, and one of their first works was to establish their church (St. Stephen's), which reflected great credit on those responsible for its conception. In Portland there were as fine a class of buildings as could be found anywhere, which spoke volumes for the work of the old pioneers. After 1834 Major Mitchell met the Hentys here and told them of rich country lying to the north, which they investigated, with the result that they discovered those fine estates of Muotham and Merino Downs, on which flocks of sheep were raised that were famous throughout the whole Commonwealth. Edward Henty, people with whom he came in contact declared, was a man exercising great consideration for others, which was true of many of the other old settlers, whose names would go down to posterity with reverence. (Applause.) A big development in the country during the 88 years since it was founded had certainly taken place. The wool clip was now some 60,000,000 and 28,000,000 bushels of

The wool clip was now some £40,000,000, and 38,000,000 bushels of wheat were raised each year during the war, amounting to £10,000,000 in value. Industries had also advanced in Victoria, which stood in the forefront because of its size and climatic conditions. Everything was most favorable, and soon he hoped to see as many people in the State as the whole Commonwealth contained to-day. 66 per cent. of our butter and a third of our wheat were consumed in Australia, but with the increase of population the whole of the produce would be absorbed here, and production

generally would increase. There was ample room for new settlers, and he explained a scheme whereby 10,000 would be obtained from overseas, some of whom would be settled in the Western District, which would make for the advancement of Portland. If these new arrivals were like the Henty family they would progress. Edward Henty was 23 or 24 when he first landed here, and was not afraid to face big propositions and to transfer his affections and belongings to another country. It took courage to come into a country inhabited by blacks and containing other dangers, and these settlers who were coming out to-day would need that same courage and indomitable spirit to make good. There was need in the country still for roads, but what were the conditions 60 years ago? From Portland the nearest town was Geelong. Bullock teams were the only means of transport, and provisions to last for months had to be carried, but the men had one firm single purpose to develop the country, and now they accomplished it was evidenced on every hand to-day. If the young men of the present generation stood shoulder to shoulder like the Hentys, this would eventually be a great land. He referred to a sea captain named Dutton being the first white man to arrive here in search of whales. But it was not whales at the present time. The wool, butter and other great industries had sprung up, and the greatest wealth of the country was now from its primary production. If the people would stand behind the Government in an endeavor to provide every facility for further developing these industries, there no doubt would be a great future ahead. But we could not hold this land with the small population we at present possessed. Previously we had depended on the British Empire, but now we must work out our own destiny, which could only be done by our own people. We had more privileges and opportunities than any other part of the world, and if we took

privileges and opportunities than any other part of the world, and if we took advantage of them the future should not be feared. Mr Oman then unveiled the memorial, whilst the large gathering rose and stood in silence.

At this stage the Mayor announced that their dear old friend, Mr Wm. Poland, had passed away at 7 a.m. that morning at the advanced age of 96 years. It seemed remarkable, he said, that his end had come on such a day as the one they were commemorating. The late Mr Poland was one of the last links that connected with the Hentys, to whom he was an old and faithful servant. The master, he (the speaker) understood often sought advice of his servants, while he at times gave words of admonition. Mr Poland's death, he repeated, was almost the last link that severed them from the early days.—[The funeral of the late gentleman took place on Tuesday, when a large number followed his remains to the last resting place in the South cemetery. The Portland Old Boys' Fraternity were represented by ex-Presidents Ben Hoare, John Sampson, John Maddock, and Messrs W. E. Thomas, M.L.A., E. F. Hughes and Andrew Clark.]

Mr Thomas, M.L.A., addressed the gathering, and emphasised the fact that it was essential for the present generation to perpetuate the spirit of the Hentys to further develop this grand country—the greatest heritage of God. He was thankful to say that spirit was not yet dead in this corner of Victoria. Only recently in the north of his electorate a number of soldiers had been settled, and by dint of hard labor they were now doing well. As an example of the old pioneers he related how he had seen one boy with a bit of a hat for shelter, and a bark lean-to for cooking purposes. Now he had established a nice little home and was very comfortable. Through the many years bad roads had been a great hardship, and in this connection he pointed to the first bit of road—within a few yards of them on the bluff—over which Henty first trooked. Other

interests had also penalised this magnificent port, and he wanted to appeal to public sentiment to help them. The ball was in front of goal, and for God's sake he appealed to the Portland people to kick it through. The time was ripe for the development of the port, and he stressed the error of centralisation in one spot, which had been the ruination of others in the older days. Melbourne was a city at one end of the State, and there was no reason why Portland should

there was no reason why Portland should not be another at this end. Pointing to the north, he exclaimed: "That's where I was bred - as wild as the kangaroos I hunted and just as shy, and I have not altered to the present day. (Laughter.) This remains: Here is this splendid heritage of God, too long neglected, but the moss has gone. I appeal to local residents and the home-comers to help us to create a public sentiment that will complete this great heritage by developing this fine harbor. Thus will be added to the State an asset of which any nation will be proud."

Mr Bremner, Chief President of the A.N.A., said he was born in New Zealand, and was proud of the fact that his mother was the first white child born in the County of Nelson in that country. He endorsed the sentiments already expressed that we should all do our parts in building up this magnificent land which had been handed down to us. Very few settlers 84 years ago knew they were sowing the seeds of a great population, any more than we knew in 1914 that 36,000 men would go from our shores and establish Australia as a great new nation. But that was so. Up to the beginning of the war our country was under the protection of the Motherland. We had the freest country in the world, and still enjoyed that privilege. It had been passed on to us free and untrammelled, but when the call came those men made a nation of Australia, who was now admitted to the conferences of all the nations of the world.

Mr Ben Hoare said he had first started his profession as a journalist in the old "Chronicle" office at Portland under the late Mr F. C. Hughes. Sixty six years ago he romped as a boy over these beautiful greens, and he had grown up as an Australian citizen, always retaining to the centre of his heart a great love for Portland. Voluminous addresses had been delivered expressing doubt as to whether that great spirit of the British race would or would not succeed in making the land what it ought to be. A few years before the war it was propagated to the German press that the British race was becoming enfeebled and flabby, but all that had been dispelled by the fact that Great Britain had sent forth into the field an army unparalleled in number and quality in the Empire's glorious history. He had no doubts that the present and future generations would fail. In conclusion he said he was proud to stand there and add his testimony to these glorious surroundings. (Applause.)

Mr John Maddock, on behalf of the Old Boys, and Cr Carter (Mayor of Warrnambool) also spoke, the latter conveying the good wishes of his people

to their neighbors in Portland.

The Mayor said it was well that they should revere the memories of the old pioneers. Referring to the present, he said a new spirit had been created in the people of Portland, and he was hopeful that the memorial would yet overlook a great and prosperous city.