

Anzac Day

OPENING OF SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL HALL

Anzac Day, 1924, at Portland was made the occasion of the opening of the new soldiers' memorial hall and billiard rooms, which have been built as the result of a long-sustained public effort. The ceremony took place at the usual united gathering in the Gardens, and carried with all the solemnity and impressiveness which characterises the observance of Australia's national day throughout the whole Commonwealth. In addition, appropriate services were held in the various local churches during the morning, and were attended by good congregations. Business places were closed in the afternoon from 3 o'clock till 5.30, and thus all were afforded the opportunity of joining in the proceedings outside the memorial hall.

On a commanding site at the corner of Percy and Gawler streets, the building presents a most imposing spectacle when viewed from all quarters, and is a worthy monument to those who have served their country so well. There the hall will stand for all time as concrete testimony to the sacrifice and heroism of Portland's young manhood and to the appreciation of a grateful public, mindful of the immensity of their obligations to these noble defenders of the Homeland. The hall is built of brick, with the exterior walls rough-casted in concrete and the interior lined with plaster of a very fine quality. The front porchway, which in time to come will form the main memorial, has ample room for tablets and honor boards in commemoration of those who have fallen, and provision has also been made for the fitting in of memorial windows as opportunity occurs—and it is hoped that this will be at an early date. A billiard room, 20 feet x 30, leaves ample room for the installation of a second table; meeting and reading rooms adjoining have dimensions of 20 x 16 and 10 x 14 respectively. Leading off the porchway is the secretary's office, 16 x 14, which is most comfortably fitted up with a roll-top desk and other appurtenances. The rooms are nicely furnished throughout, though in this respect many little things are required before the

little things are required before the soldiers' home is thoroughly replete. Mr D. E. Errey, the contractor, deserves great credit for the workmanlike way in which all details have been attended to, and the building is a fine advertisement for his trade, of which he apparently is a thorough master.

The Mayor at the outset of proceedings, explained that the object of the day was a twofold one—firstly to commemorate Anzac Day, and secondly to declare the memorial hall officially open. He then called on Captain-Chaplain Bradbury, M.C., to address the assemblage.

In a stirring oration, typical of the man himself, Rev Bradbury gave unstinted praise to the glorious deeds of the Anzacs. He said we must gather in this act of remembrance not only those who gave their lives on the field of battle, but also those who served their country in any capacity during the titanic struggle now some six years past. All had done their duty—at times, perhaps, ordinary, but at others wildly exciting and perilous. We must not forget that the man who gave his life on duty did so that others might live. We also had to include the women—those who had lived and died most nobly. All were Anzacs in the true meaning of the word, and through them Australians had been enabled to make themselves prominent in the eyes of the world. In order that we should live it was necessary that some must die, and it behoved us to remember those who had made that supreme sacrifice. That brought us to the remembrance of the death of our common Saviour, whom we revered as the Prince of Sacrifice. That same self sacrifice and great disposition was deep-seated in our lives, which should be a revelation for those who died for us. Thus would be shown the pertinence of this celebration when we spoke so highly of the Anzacs, coupled with all those who died in the great cause. Whether in peace or war, there was always greed and selfishness, and until these two pernicious evils were stamped out, war would continue indefinitely, and when that condition was again experienced citizens would once more become the soldiers to defend their country. And in thinking of the pilgrimage of the Anzacs, he repudiated the statement that the first to leave these shores were simply "Cook's Tourists." They did not enter that great disturbance

"Cook's Tourists." They did not enter that great disturbance with any such spirit, but considered their lives as nothing to fulfil the traditions of the British race and to protect those at home. Those men at Gallipoli stamped Australia's name with honor, and the reputation of those who now slept on foreign soil was proclaimed by men who in France, Belgium and Gallipoli had fought side by side with them, saw their valour and knew their worth—the greatest fact to be borne in mind when appraising the Australian soldier. Remembrance of Anzac Day was important, as we needed to bring in view all the deeds of the greatest national value, and as we called to mind the scenes gone by, we were compelled to admit that our memory to be true must be shown in our lives as civilians. If we wished Australia's name to continue fair and glorious, we must as citizens develop those traits so much to the fore during the upheaval now past, and which belonged to peace as well as war. Until we did that the memory of Gallipoli or any other was empty and unreal. Everyone

was faced with the difficulties of life, and to them he would say—"Play the game." When we analysed life, we had to come back to the basic truth that the Almighty gave us the ability to become a comrade in its sincerest meaning. He was the author and sustainer of life, and when we passed from this body He received us unto Himself. The soldier knew this, and was encouraged and strengthened thereby. They fought well, died well and now slept well, and we should now see that we lived well.

Mr W. Stuchbery sounded the Last Post, after which the flag was dipped, and thus terminated the first part of the proceedings.

Mr W. J. Williamson, one of the building committee entrusted with the carrying out of details in connection with the memorial hall, said they had succeeded in selling the land and buildings on the site acquired at a price which almost covered the cost of the new hall. Owing to various causes the work had been considerably delayed, but they considered great care was necessary so that the building when erected should be a worthy monument and one which would completely meet the requirements of the returned men. The contractor

dietly meet the requirements of the returned men. The contractor and architect had carried out their work well, and the fact that the labor had been entrusted to men of their own town ensured that the building had been well erected and every brick truly laid. Certain alterations to the original plan had been deemed necessary to add to the usefulness and appearance of the hall, and there were yet many things to be attended to. To his mind the building would not be complete till the vacant windows of the porchway were filled with cathedral glass of appropriate design, which would put the finishing touches on the hall as originally planned. Principally owing to the unremitting efforts of several townswomen a considerable amount of money had been raised, and this without any direct individual appeal. £400 or £500 was still required for fittings, etc., which could only come from the townspeople, and for the credit of Portland he was sure they would rise to the occasion and see that no debt on the building was allowed to remain. The returned men already had a billiard table and other things which provided for their comfort in the rooms, but more was yet required. They were not going to be selfish as regards the use of the rooms, but were prepared to allow other men of the town to join in and enjoy the privileges of membership of the club. He formally handed the key of the building to the Mayor, who in turn would deliver it to the soldiers, for whom the hall was held in trust by the Borough Council.

The Mayor accepted the key with pleasure, and Mrs Wyatt then unlocked the door and officially declared the hall open amidst applause.

On behalf of the Borough Council the Mayor then handed the key to the president of the Returned Soldiers' Association (Capt. D. W. Hislop), and trusted that the returned men would live long to enjoy the privileges and good fellowship that would exist in their club. (Applause.)

In reply, Capt. Hislop said he accepted the key with gratitude on behalf of the returned men, whose deepest thanks were due to the ladies and gentlemen of the town who had worked so hard to bring about the erection of such a fine hall. As Mr Williamson had said, the returned boys did not intend to be selfish, and had agreed to open the rooms to any person of the

be selfish, and had agreed to open the rooms to any person of the town properly nominated and balloted for, who would receive full benefits but have no voice in the management of the branch's affairs. He trusted many would take advantage of the privileges of membership.

Mr W. E. Thomas arrived late on the scene owing to being detained at a united service at Heywooh. The Mayor hoped, however, that the company would bear with him while he spoke a few words. After commending the Portland people for their efforts in building such a fine memorial hall, Mr Thomas said that in many instances the returned men had not been treated as they deserved, but the authorities were doing their best. The work of reconstruction after the dark period of war was an immense problem, and he asked the public to withhold any destructive criticism, but rather assist by all means in their power the work of repatriating the soldiers who had wrought such noble deeds at Anzac and on the battlefields of Europe.

The Mayor said he was not allowed to make an appeal for funds, but he invited those desirous of giving to leave their donations with him in the hall. By this means over £20 was raised.

In the evening a reunion of diggers and their relatives was held at the rooms, when a very happy time was spent with songs (by Mrs H. V. McLeod), dancing, games and social intercourse. Brilliant lighting showed the building up to great advantage, and the unanimous verdict was that the soldier boys have found a most comfortable home. Supper was provided by the ladies, with the energetic worker, Mrs Anderson, in charge. Apologies for absence were received from Messrs Alex. Anderson, T. I. Smith and Rev. V. R. Bradbury.

During the afternoon Mr Andrews was busy with his camera, and those desiring photos to commemorate the occasion may secure them from that gentleman.