

ECHUCA DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

ITS WAR SERVICES.

UNVEILING THE MEMORIAL TABLET.

Nestling in a nook of the Campaspe river, somewhat remote from the immediate business centre of Echuca—though that has its compensations—a continuation of that show place and beauty spot, the Victoria Park, is situated the Echuca and District High School. The second and third words of its nomenclature require special emphasis. The institution has no strictly local significance. It is here for the countryside as well as for the townsman. And that is no little part of its worth.

Yesterday afternoon marked a red-letter day in its history—not a very lengthy one, as yet. The occasion was the unveiling of a memorial, which will serve as a reminder to thousands of future pupils of the services rendered by ex-students in the World War. Advantage was taken by the head teacher (Mr. L. R. Brookes, B.A.) of the visit of an inspectorial party to arrange for the principal visitor to perform the ceremony.

A representative gathering attended to do honor to the occasion and to pay a tribute of gratitude and respect to the lads who had so greatly proved to the nation the truth of Florence's words, "Tis sweet for native land to die, 'tis noble." They truly died that we might live. Their memory lingers for all time in the hearts of the district that gave them birth. Some relatives were present, and all were profoundly moved, not only by thoughts of what might have been, but in justifiable pride at public recognition of the Great Sacrifice made by beloved ones for the cause of humanity.

The Mayor (Mr. A. C. Ostrom), in the absence of Mr. W. G. Boyle, president of the High School Council, delivered the opening address. Mr. Ostrom said that the occasion was a solemn, but a glorious association with great deeds, done in a time of national stress and exaltation. Though only established a few years, and though very few boys of military age were available, 28 students and ex-students had volunteered. Three of them would return no more. The people were debtors to those who had sacrificed their lives, and to those who had returned. Many of the latter were now occupying honorable and responsible positions in their district and State. What lessons might be learned? He thought that the boys particularly might bear in mind the desirability of taking an active part in the public life of the community. In the assembly hall of one of the big Sydney schools was displayed the text, "They carry the torch." The students of Echuca High School must carry out the great A.I.F. tradition. Modern tendency was in the direction of making money-getting the supreme aim of existence. The sincere spirit of self-sacrifice, the desire for service for one's fellows was the higher aim. The belief that their school, their town, their district, and then their State was the best in the Commonwealth was a belief well worth cultivating. Mr. Ostrom concluded with one

manwealth was a belief well worth cultivating. Mr. Ostrom concluded with one of his little stories. "Jimmy," said Judge Murray, to a Papuan, whom he had sentenced to death for the murder of his admitted friend, "Jimmy, why did you do it?" "I killed my friend," was the reply, "because he talked too much." They might have a similar excuse, if he (the speaker) spoke too lengthily now. (Laughter and applause.)

Mr. B. Berryman, president of the Fathers-Association branch, said that memories of the war were perhaps not what they wanted to reflect on, rather was it better to forget its fearful tragedies, but they could never forget the sacrifices, the daring, and the courage of their soldiers. So they paid tribute to the dear dead and to the brave living, whose names were on the honor roll of their school. Quincy's words, "However we die, we die as free men," had been their unconscious motto. They had played the game. They had been true to principle. Let the present, and future generations of students profit by that bright example. Let them be true, in accord with the motto of their school. Let them keep up to the standard set by those whose deeds they that day honored.

Mr. L. J. Wrigley, M.A., senior inspector of secondary schools, said that although the High School system had only been established some 15 years at the time of the outbreak of war, practically all the eligibles had offered for service. It was fitting to have some record of their deeds. He suggested that on Anzac Day every year, the record of the A.I.F. should be read, and that, by a moment's silence, the memory of their comrades' services and sacrifices should be kept green. He urged the students to give, in their turn, personal service to returned men and their institutions, and specially to help in a personal way the maimed and crippled.

Drawing up a ribbon of the school colors (blue, red and yellow bands), the senior inspector removed the Union Jack from the bronze metal plaque that bore the names of the ex-students, who had served King and Empire. Two songs were rendered, and Mr. T. V. Manger sounded the "Last Post." The National Anthem was sung as a fitting conclusion to the ceremony.