

Unveiling of Honor Board at Grass Valley

AN IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY.

The unveiling of the Honor Board, presented by Mr. and Mrs. F. R. Walsh to the residents of Grass Valley in memory of those who have enlisted from that district, took place on Sunday last at the Grass Valley State School. The ceremony was performed by Mr. William Sermon, the patriarch of the district, that gentleman having celebrated his ninety-first birthday on the 27th of last month. It was also fitting that Mr. Sermon should perform the ceremony, as he has several grandsons (two of whom have paid the supreme sacrifice) and other relatives at the front.

The Board is a magnificent piece of work. It stands 10ft. 4in. in height, by about 4ft. in breadth, and is made wholly of beautifully polished jarrah. It stands upon pedestals about three feet in height, and has space for three rows of names. Already there are 77 names on brass plates engraved thereon, and seven more are to be added. Twelve have made the great sacrifice. It will therefore be seen that the toll of death amongst those who enlisted from the Grass Valley district has been heavy. The board is surmounted by carving that is really beautiful. Above the row of names are the words, "The Great War," whilst above the whole is the rising sun, under which is a shield on which is carved the statue of an Australian soldier, that has on the one side the Union Jack and on the other the Australian flag. Two guns mounted on their carriages also stand out prominently, not a detail having been omitted by the carver. Beneath these are the words "Pro Patria" and the numerals 1914, the year in which the war started. The whole of the work was done by Mr. Madeley, of Perth.

Perth.

The assemblage was the largest that has ever been seen in Grass Valley, there being fully 500 persons, from all parts of the district, present, and through the generosity and forethought of Mr. and Mrs. Walsh, the future generations will ever remember those, who, recognising their duty, left their peaceful pursuits to take part in the great fight for the freedom of the world.

The ceremony was formally performed in the school room by Mr. Sermon, after which several gentlemen addressed the assemblage from the verandah of the school.

Mr. Havelock Weight, J.P., on behalf of Mr. William Sermon, said that gentleman was the proudest man in Grass Valley that day. He recognised the great tribute which had been paid them, and was absolutely proud of the district which had sent so many of its men to the war, and was doubly proud because, amongst the names engraved on the board were those of several of his own blood and kin. He regretted that there was one which bore that fatal brass notch. Mr. Sermon also desired to pay tribute to the women of the district for the noble efforts they were putting forth. Mr. Sermon was proud of the number of men that had enlisted from the district, and regretted the great loss of life sustained, but realised that in this Homeric strife they must expect many sacrifices and bear them. He hoped the bereaved mothers would find some consolation in the fact that they had borne their part by bringing into the world a band of heroes. He also hoped that he would still be alive when they would welcome home their heroes in the not far distant future.

Mr. F. W. Meeres, on behalf of the residents of Grass Valley, conveyed to Mr. and Mrs. Walsh their heartfelt thanks for their noble gift, and said it was only one of the many kindly actions that Mr. and Mrs. Walsh had done during their residence in Grass Valley. He noticed that space had

Valley. He noticed that space had been left on the board for the addition of more names, but he sincerely hoped none would be added. He trusted that the end of the war was in sight, and was sure that if all the fighting forces of the Allies were of the same calibre as our own, the war would have been ended ere now.

Mr. P. O'Driscoll, in supporting, said the people of the district were grateful to the donors for their generosity and thoughtfulness in presenting the Honor Board. There was no occasion to go back into history to seek for heroes. They now had them of their own, and the people of Grass Valley, when they gazed upon the Honor Board, would realise that their young men had gone forth in a spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice. He referred to the Ancient Greeks, to that noble band of 300 Spartans under Leonidas who stopped the Persian hosts, but were slain to a man. Their deeds could not be excelled, but our own heroes were prepared to die for their homes and institutions and die as the heroes of the ancient days did.

The Rev. Father O'Donnell desired to express his appreciation of those who had gone forth to fight the battles of the Empire in fields overseas. All nations honored their heroes. In

France, Napoleon was idolised, likewise in the United States of America the people revered the name of the Father of his Country—the great Washington. They in their own way should revere those who had gone forth to fight for them. There was one thing they could be thoroughly sure of, and that was that those who had gone had done their duty, and had gone to uphold the sacred duty of Australia in foreign fields. He hoped many would return to Grass Valley, and was pleased to be present and to know that those who had answered the call had been appreciated. There was no greater sacrifice that a man could make "Than lay down his life for his friend." Any honor conferred upon the heroes could

honor conferred upon the heroes could not be too great.

Rev. J. Mason was pleased to have the privilege and opportunity of attending. They had repeatedly seen long lists of men who had gone out to fight the battles of their country, and then they had only to turn back before the war and remember the peaceful lives they had lived. They were all heroes! The Austrabians had scaled the heights of Gallipoli, fought nobly for the honor of their Country, and had made a name for Australia that will never die, but would be engraved in the hearts of the people for generations to come. The Honor Board was a remembrance of those men who had gone to the front and also of the spirit that had prompted them to go. The call had never fallen upon deaf ears, and men willingly left their loved ones to do their duty. It was pleasing that the Board had been erected in the School, as it would remind the children of those who had so nobly responded to the call of their country.

Mr. F. W. Roe, the Mayor of Northam (Mr. A. W. Byfield), and Mr A. E. C. Middleton also spoke, the latter referring to the heavy percentage of deaths and casualties that had occurred amongst those who had enlisted from Grass Valley.

Mr. Roberts-O'Brien said that those who had enlisted richly deserved all that was said of them, but they must also remember the men who had endeavoured to enlist but had been rejected. They suffered just as much as those on the battlefields, and they should also honor them. The highest of all motives was duty, and the lowest the fear of pain. Australians could never be accused of the latter, as it had their sense of duty that had prompted them to enlist voluntarily and go to Egypt, Gallipoli and France. This feeling had been instituted by their mothers, and in a subsidiary sense by their teachers, as they helped to mould the character of the child. He considered that the school was the most appropriate of

school was the most appropriate of all places in which to place the Board, as the children, when looking upon it, would say, "I know that man and it is my duty to emulate him." The germ of duty would therefore be instilled into them. Mothers would sorrow over their fallen sons, but that sorrow would be softened in the knowledge that they had died in doing their duty. He desired to sincerely thank Mr. and Mrs. Walsh for their generosity and hoped that residents of other centres would emulate them in placing Honor Boards in schools.

Mr. F. R. Walsh, who was received with prolonged applause, expressed his extreme pleasure in seeing so many present at the ceremony, and said it had been a great privilege to both Mrs. Walsh and himself to be enabled to erect the Honor Board. He had known many of the boys, whose names appear on the board since their childhood. They had been fine athletes and good comrades, but their friends did not know of the courage and heroism they would display when called upon to do their duty. Those lads would never be forgotten, and he hoped that the Honor Board would serve to remind future generations that there had been a generation that had not been afraid to risk their lives in honor of their country. If any names had been omitted from the Board he would be pleased if the relatives would inform him, and he would see that the plates were immediately procured. (Applause.) The proceedings terminated with the singing of the National Anthem.