

NEW INSTITUTE AT MYLOR.

A MEMORIAL TO THE HON. G. W. COTTON.

Thirty-eight years ago when the Hon. G. W. Cotton introduced his scheme for homestead blocks for the workers, he met with much opposition, and the nature of a great deal of it may be gathered from a statement made in a speech recently delivered in London by Sir John Cockburn when he said that he had never so clearly realised the inner significance of the Biblical story of Naboth's vineyard as when he introduced the Bill for the resumption of land for closer settlement.

At the time there was acute industrial depression throughout the State, and the Government were hard pressed to find the money for relief works for married men at 4s per day. The Hon. G. W. Cotton was one of the first to realise that it was the duty of the Government to adopt something more than this temporary expedient, and he evolved the homestead blocks scheme, whereby working men were granted the lease of 20 acres of land for 21 years, and were assisted and encouraged by the Government to settle on these blocks. He had the whole-hearted assistance of Dr. Allan Campbell, Sir John Cockburn, the Hon. John Gordon, the Hon. R. A. Tarlton, and D. M. Charleston, Mr. Krichauff, and many other public-spirited men of his time. Twenty-seven homestead block centres were established, and throughout the State these prosperous little communities stand as an evidence of his foresight, courage, and faith. Interesting memories of the early days of the movement were recalled at Mylor on Saturday, when the new Institute, to be known as the Mylor Cotton Memorial Hall, was opened by Mr. C. H. Cotton, a son of the founder of the settlement. The weather conditions were ideal for an outdoor gathering, and 200 people were present, among these being a number of the original settlers, some having travelled a considerable distance from various parts of the State to take part in the ceremony.

Mr. E. Meredith (president of the institute committee) said the new hall had been built on the site of the temporary building which had served the needs of the district so long. With his friends and neighbors he had striven hard to obtain an adequate building. It had been accounted an ambitious project, but they had seen their efforts crowned with success, and the satisfaction of the people who would use it was their reward. (Applause.)

Mr. E. Wilson said as one who had had considerable association with the Working Men's Blocks since its inception it gave him great pleasure to see this fine memorial to the memorial of their old friend. It was a happy omen that the

friend. It was a happy omen that the hall should be opened by Mr. Cotton's son, and on behalf of the district he extended a cordial welcome to Mr. R. H. Cotton, a grandson, and Master G. D. Cotton, a great-grandson. They were the representatives of a name that was honored, not only in Mylor, but throughout Australia. Under the Homestead Blocks Act over 4,000 leases had been taken up, and 9,000 people had been able to acquire their own homes. Under the Blockholders Loans Act he had helped to distribute over £30,000 to tide the settlers over their initial difficulties. (Applause.) Under the scheme, instead of vast empty spaces in the country, they had an average of one person to every six acres, and he ventured to say that if the rest of Australia were as thickly populated as the district of Mylor there would be no Asiatic peril. (Applause.) It was significant that 911 children had passed through the little Mylor school since the closer settlement of the district, and the numbers spoke for themselves. The Hon. G. W. Cotton had always believed in educational facilities for the settlers, and he had given them the nucleus of a library years ago, which would now be housed in the new building. Sir Langdon Bonython, a staunch friend of the district, had laid the foundation stone last June, and his name would always be linked with that of the founder of Mylor in the estimation of the people. (Applause.) He had much pleasure in asking Mr. C. H. Cotton formally to open the new building.

Mr. Cotton, who was presented with a handsome silver key by Messrs. E. Wilson and Gomares, the builder and the decorator, said it gave him great pleasure to declare the building open, especially as he had been present at the opening of the old Institute in 1887. He had been much touched by their references to his father, who would have been delighted to see his faith in the workers so abundantly realised. (Applause.)

Mr. W. Filling said, as one of the members of the old Institute committee, he was glad to see a worthy memorial at last erected to the memory of the man who had fought so hard for their welfare, in the face of the most extraordinary opposition. His influence, and that of the men who assisted him, was felt throughout the State to-day. (Applause.)

Mr. E. F. Wingrove (chairman of trustees), as one of the first purchasers of a block in the Mylor district in 1886, was delighted at this visible and dignified sign of their progress. Ten years ago they had organised working bees to clear the land surrounding the old Institute, and it had been intended then to proceed with the erection of the new building. The war, however, had driven the project into the background, for they had decided to spend nothing in that direction until the Germans had been defeated. The people had therefore bent all their energies to patriotic purposes. The honor-roll that hung on the wall testified to the patriotism of the district, for it contained the names of 47 soldiers and two nurses, a number of whom had made the supreme sacrifice. The generosity of the people had been attested by their contributions to the patriotic funds, and it was not until the conclusion of the war that the Institute committee had felt justified in putting forward their claims once more. The people had stood behind them, and he was sure they would soon pay the debt of close on £400 which remained. He could not close without mentioning

left of close on £400 which remained. He could not close without mentioning the work of the builder, Mr. E. Wilson, jun., who had carried out the work at a wage which represented a considerable financial sacrifice, considering the high rates obtainable for labor elsewhere. (Applause.)

Mr. R. H. Cotton said he was pleased that the hall commemorated the name of his grandfather and Sir Langdon Bonython. The district had been fortunate in the friendship and unflinching help of these men, but all their efforts must have been unavailing but for the skill and energy of the blockers themselves. (Applause.)

Mr. O'Shaughnessy, in conveying the thanks of the residents to Mr. Cotton for opening the hall, paid a well-deserved tribute to the members of the committee,

who, he said, were in the forefront of every movement for the benefit of the district.

Mr. George Andrews supported the resolution, and Mr. Cotton replied, stating his intention to present a large framed portrait of his father to the trustees of the building.

The new hall, which is a substantial stone structure 50 ft. x 30 ft., has a louvre roof, and on the front gable is the inscription—"Mylor Cotton Memoria Hall." The marble foundation-stone bears the name of Sir Langdon Bonython and the date June 24, 1922, on which he laid it. The situation of the Institute is ideal, for, in the heart of the township, it has been built upon the high ground facing the Recreation Reserve and commanding a beautiful view of the countryside. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to believe that it is within a few miles of the city, as on all sides there is gently undulating and heavily wooded country. The building has three quarters of an acre of land attached, and this will later on be planted with trees. Provision has been made at the back of the hall for additions. The stage is 25 ft. x 12 ft., and the rest of the building is floored with jarrah. The walls have been artistically treated with white fibrous plaster, with a deep grey dado. The ceiling is panelled with the same material, with red pine mouldings, and the whole effect is one of spaciousness and dignity. The lighting is on the petro system, and five handsome nickelled fittings have been installed. Altogether the building has cost over £1,000, and more than £600 of this has already been paid.

The members of the committee are Messrs. L. Meredith (president), C. Cooper (vice-president), E. Wilson, jun. (hon. treasurer), A. Aitken (hon. secretary), W. Tilling, jun., F. Reynolds, H. Lapidge, A. Wylie, and Norman Stevenson.

At the conclusion of the formal ceremony the guests were entertained at afternoon tea by Mesdames Jackson (convener) and Wylie, Stevenson, Reynolds, Green, and Colby, and Miss Harman. A cool drinks stall was presided over by Mr. Jackson, and ice-cream and sweets were sold by the Misses Smith, W. Cooper, and E. Wylie.

In the evening a concert was given in the new building. A number of friends journeyed from Adelaide to take part. Those assisting were Mesdames O'Shaughnessy, Sullivan, and Jones, Misses Weiner, H. Aitken O'Shaughnessy, Haslett, Reynolds, Weber, Rowell Smith, and Saunders, and Messrs

H. Reynolds, Weber, Rowell Smith, and Saunders, and Messrs Sullivan, O'Brien, Webber, Brogan Keal, McGuire, and Hammond. Mrs O'Shaughnessy was pianiste for the dance which followed. High tea and supper were provided by the ladies of the district.