

EMPIRE DAY.

ALUMNY CREEK CELEBRATION.

HONOR BOARD UNVEILED.

The principal feature of the Empire Day celebration at Alumny Creek School was the unveiling of an honor board containing the names of 20 ex-pupils of the school, and 15 other men who had enlisted from the district. The function took place on Friday afternoon, in the presence of a large and fully representative gathering, over which the teacher of the school, Mr. A. R. Wotherspoon, presided. An apology was received from Mr. Fraser, district inspector, for his inability to attend.

After the National Anthem was sung, the Ven. Archdeacon Tress offered prayer, and Mr. Wotherspoon, after referring to the significance and meaning of Empire Day celebration, said he hoped that the honor board which was to be unveiled would help to keep in memory for all time the names of the brave boys who had gone from Alumny Creek. On previous Empire Day celebrations those boys had been sitting in the front rows as the younger boys were sitting that day, and he had spoken to them of the greatness of the Empire, and had showed them what they had to do. He was thankful to know that those lessons had not fallen on unheeding ears. As the teacher of the school, he was proud to think that boys from the district had gone forward and had responded to the great call. The war was not yet over, and probably others would have to go as well, following the example so worthily set by those whose names they were perpetuating. Assisted by outside people they had decided to get an honor board to be placed in the school, where it could be read by the children of future generations.

Mrs. Boyd and Miss Eggins, who have lost brothers in the war, drew aside the flags which veiled the board, and the first-named declared the board duly unveiled.

Ptes. Baker and Rale unveiled two en-

larged photographs of fallen heroes—
Ptes. John Chapman and Roy H. Eggins—
the first-named was killed and the last-
named died.

Pte. Baker said it was a great honor to him to be asked to unveil the photographs of comrades in arms, who had been residents of Alumny Creek. He had the greatest sympathy for their relatives, although they must be proud of those lads. Alumny Creek residents always had reason to feel proud of those who had realised their duty in the early part of the war. Those two lads he had known a good deal—they had been boys together. He knew that they had done their bit as well as any Australians could do. He felt honored that he had been called upon, with Pte. Bale, to unveil these photos.

and girls, said he trusted they should look to the motto at the top of the board: "For God, King, and Country." He had made the inscription simple, so that boys and girls of tender age could read it. He hoped they would give a hearty welcome to those men whose names were on the roll who came back. That day's affair was only a little thing—the big thing would come later on. They should remember that those who made the supreme sacrifice gave their lives for God, King, and country.

The Mayor of Grafton, Ald. D. McFarlane, said he was indeed pleased to resume his acquaintance with the Alumny Creek people once more. To-day, Empire Day, was somewhat different from what it used to be previously. They now had associated with it the unveiling of an honor board. It was only right that the memory of the men who volunteered, and left the comforts of home and their business, and went to the front to fight for the defence of their country should be honored and revered as it was. Men who had wielded the willow in the games of cricket played on the oval were just as good in wielding the rifle and upholding Australia's good name. The honor board would be handed down, and would be an imperishable monument to the men who had left Alumny Creek, and the same thing would apply to other places where

thing would apply to other places where honor boards were erected. It was the intention to do the same thing at Grafton, but it had been postponed, but he hoped, not for very long. He hoped the day was not far distant when the other men would return and when there would be a great convivial gathering to welcome them. He believed that the Allies would win in the end. Our soldiers were fighting in defence of the liberty which, under the British flag, was the greatest that could be given to us. He hoped that when the next Empire Day came round there would no longer be any need for men to go to the front, and that we would have a big celebration to welcome back those who had gone.

Dr. Page, Mayor of South Grafton, said that one reason why he felt it a privilege to be present was that practically every name on the honor board was known to him personally. The names of nearly all the local cricketers were there. He would like to specially mention that country sportsmen had more freely gone to the front than those who indulged in sport round the metropolis. He could never go to a gathering like that without feeling that the suspense and anxiety with which people looked upon men at the front was a mistake—at the front there was always an air of cheerfulness. The reason for that was that the men's thoughts were wholly centred on the war, and he was afraid that until the whole of the Allied peoples felt as the soldiers did, we would not achieve victory. Germany was trying to cripple in every possible way the morale of the Allied peoples by pursuing a system of terrorism. Returned soldiers brought back an air of cheerfulness from the front, one reason for their cheerfulness being that they had so much to do, with 5,000,000 men on the West front, equal to the population of Australia. The men often obtained opportunities there that were denied them in Australia in the way of finding new

occupations, and every man was kept keyed up. After speaking further from his own experiences of the life of the men at the front, Dr. Page said that

men at the front, Dr. Page said that those who died there died with a smile on their lips and a message to tell their friends in Australia that they were not quitters. In conclusion, he expressed a hope that those who were still alive would live to come back unharmed from the war.

Archdeacon Tress referred to the liability of the people to forget, and impressed on the boys and girls that they had met to honor the brave and could not do too much to show honor to those who had gone to fight for King and country, especially those who had laid down their lives. The motto on the honor board reminded them of their duty to God and the King; therefore of their duty to their country, and every time they saw the flag waving in the breeze it should remind them of those three things. He hoped that the Empire Day celebrations would be used to remind us of the brave men's great deeds in the past and of their virtues in the present, so that the future of our Empire might be all that we hoped it to be.

Dr. Henry, in speaking of the principle of perpetuating the memory of the men who had fought for their country, mentioned that on one occasion he was in Virginia on Decoration Day, May 30, and saw 23,000 star-spangled flags, each marking the resting place of some American soldier who had fought in the American wars. Some had died in Cuba and some in the Philippines, and the American Government did not like to let the bones of those soldiers remain in alien soil, so had brought them home and interred them in a great cemetery. It would not be possible to bring to Australia the bones of our men who had fallen in Palestine, at Gallipoli, in France or in Flanders, but we could set aside a day on which to especially honor the memory of those who had died that Australia might be free. The speaker went on to show that the hardships suffered at the front were greater than any undergone here, and in urging that assistance should be sent to the men at the front, asked why should we fear death in fighting for our country. It was the one pride of an Australian to be true to his pal, and to say that what any other man could do he could do. Empire Day, he went on to explain, connoted not one

he went on to explain, connoted not one nation, but a combination of nations, and without combination with the British Empire Australia could not stand. We should all be able to say, "I am an Australian, but also I am a Briton."

Lieutenant Davis said he was there on behalf of the lads whose names were on the honor board, and who were still on the other side, which he was sorry he had to leave. If any of those here had a son, brother, sweetheart, or relative at the front, the best way they could show true love for that man was by extending every power and influence they possibly could to send help to relieve him. The speaker appealed strongly for unity and the putting aside of all trivial squabbles and sectarian questions. The true democracy was to be found at the front, where it was cobbership that counted. Something had been said in that morning's paper about the Union Jack on the honor board being upside down, representing an S.O.S. There was an S.O.S. from the front; the men were calling for the help that they needed.

Mr. J. A. Puddicombe said that while we honored Australia it was far better to think we were Britons. Let us honor our country as an Empire and not as an island.

The Rev. McIlwraith said the question was whether we were worthy of the sacrifices that had been made for us. We were either aiding or hindering the soldiers in their work, according to whether our lives were worthy or unworthy.

The Rev. Curwood held it was hypocrisy of the worst kind to honor men and not to do our best to support them. He was glad to know there were some people who helped them as far as they could, but some forgot them. He was glad to hear Lieut. Davis make an appeal to put aside trumperies and devote our efforts towards the war. He trusted that the Empire Day celebrations on this occasion would be the means of bringing together all classes of the community, causing them to centre their thoughts on the one great thing—the winning of the war.

Mr. Cameron, principal of the Grafton High School, speaking as a civilian, said it was right that a lasting memorial should be placed on the walls of the school, with the names of those who had

...to be placed on the walls of the school, with the names of those who had gone to defend their country inscribed in letters of gold. The men who had gone to fight for us were splendid men—we had given of the very best of our country. They were going through hell for the sake of the people of this country, and they did not regret it. They made light of the things they went through, and, whatever happened, would never regret having gone. Let us hope to see those men back at no distant date, when the war has ceased, for those men will indeed be the men who will make Australia the great land we looked forward for it to be.

Mr. Arthur Gray, after a short speech, moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Wother- spoon, Miss Harvey, Mrs. Boyd, and Mrs. McDonald, and the speakers.

Mr. Apps seconded the vote, which was acknowledged by Mr. Wotherspoon.

The children sang "Advance, Australia Fair," and cheers were given for the King and the boys at the front. After- noon tea was afterwards partaken of, a sumptuous repast being supplied by the ladies of the district.

The honor board was the result of a special effort made by Mrs. Wotherspoon and the senior girls of the school, assist- ed by Miss Harvey and Mrs. McDonald, who raised funds for the board and the photographs. The board, which was the work of Messrs. Sanders, bears the follow- ing names, and there is room for others:—
H. Apps, A. Bower, J. Barnes, S. V. Cle- ments, E. Chapman, J. Chapman (k), A. Cameron, E. A. Cameron, E. B. Eggins, H. A. Eggins, R. H. Eggins (d.), C. W. Eggins, L. Eggins, E. Eggins, S. V. Eg- gins, R. C. Eggins, A. Ellem, V. Ellem

(k.), G. Fischer, J. Fischer, H. Ford, T. Ford, J. Grant, H. Haines, A. James, A. Kohn, L. Kohn, S. McLachlan, G. H. Preston, F. Quinn, J. Quinn, V. C. Smith, A. V. Smith, J. Skafte, W. Wray.

The honor board is headed: "Alumny Creek Public School and District Roll of Honor," and has the motto: "For God, King and Country."