

Maffra

SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL HALL.

AN IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY.

An impressive ceremony was performed at Maffra on Thursday night, in the presence of a large gathering of town and district residents, when two foundation stones of the Soldiers' Memorial Hall were laid. Mrs. John Mills, of Powerscourt, Maffra, placed the Maffra and district war memorial stone in position at the right of the main entrance; and at the left was laid the foundation stone, in memory of the fallen district men, by Mr. J. W. M'Lachlan, M.L.A. The building, which cost £2,000, is of brick, and comprises billiard rooms, library, and soldiers' club room. All district returned men and nurses are honorary life members. The portion dedicated to the fallen soldiers has been financed by returned men.

Mr. Travis, President of the Mechanics' Institute, opened the proceedings with an appropriate speech.

Mrs. J. Mills laid the foundation stone of the new building. Mrs. Mills referred to the good work that the soldier had done for his country, and the sacrifice he had made. The soldier was worthy of all that could be done for him.

Padre Weir, President of the Soldiers' Association, spoke of the sacrifice the young men from Australia had made on behalf of the Continent and the Empire.

Mr. Wise, M.H.R., delivered a splendid address, in which the dominant note was sacrifice. Mr. Wise, who was listened to attentively, paid a fine tribute to Mrs. Mills for the great work that lady had done for the soldiers. His remarks were vociferously cheered.

Mr. J. W. M'Lachlan, M.L.A., said

Mr. J. W. M'Lachlan, M.L.A., said he esteemed it a great honour to be asked to take a leading part in the ceremony. He declared the foundation stone well and truly laid, to the perpetual memory of the fallen. They paid reverent homage to the memory of the dead, and they offered their sympathy to the relatives of the men who had ungrudgingly and uncomplainingly given their lives for their country. And such a sacrifice as that could not be easily lost to mind. When the nation's call came for men they replied to it promptly. They left their homes and positions of promise, and everything they held dear in Australia behind them, in order to save the nation and the Empire. They went to a distant land to do that great work, and in carrying it out they gave their lives. One's life was the last and best gift that a man could give to his country. The history of the British race disclosed sacrifice of the highest kind, and it was this sacrifice that made the British the most forward race in the world; and endeavour to realise fully the value of that gift of life, and remember that it was parted with to save them. The stone in the building would serve to remind them of the Great War and the sacrifice; also to remind them of the mind and spirit of the soldier who had fallen. It was an historic occasion, and the girls and boys present were not likely to forget it. If they were to profit from the lesson drawn from the occasion, and be stimulated to exert themselves on behalf of the State, then they had to be prepared. In a few years the care of the State would come into their hands, and that would be a great responsibility. The deeds that won the Empire were deeds of love and kindness, of truth and obedience and humility. If the young practised these they would, when they reached womanhood and manhood, be prepared to

manhood and manhood, be prepared to govern their country wisely and well. The work done by the deceased soldiers for the nation was held in trust for their successors, and they would not prove worthy if they did not endeavour to live up to that sacrifice.

An adjournment was then made to the inside of the building. There was a large attendance and Mr. Francis occupied the chair. Addresses were given by Messrs. G. H. Wise, M.H.R.; J. M'Lachlan, M.L.A.; Crs. M'Adam on behalf of the Maffra citizens; Mr. Snowden, vice-president Soldiers' Association, and Mr. S. Achton.

After the speeches a concert and dance were held.
