

THE LATE JOHN GORDON.

The sugar industry, not only of Cairns district, but of the whole of the Far North, has been deprived of one of its oldest and best known pioneers by the death of John Gordon, at Mt. Sophia, near Gordonvale, on Monday, 4th March, 1929. He was one of the pioneers who in the early days had worked arduously and devoted his wholehearted support to the progress of this vast and most valued industry. Nothing was too much for John to do towards the advancement, not only of the sugar industry but for any movement throughout the district. He was one of the few who had devoted practically the whole of his life to the welfare of this industry which is now on such a sound foundation and his efforts had been performed in a most worthy and admirable manner. It is most difficult for any person to follow the footsteps of this worthy pioneer and come out on top with such meritorious honors as the late John Gordon had done.

John Gordon settled in the Cairns district about 1880 and during the past half century he has watched and assisted in the progress of the sugar industry. He always gave his full hearted support to every movement. Not only was he one of the first pioneers to grow cane, it was due to his generosity that many early pioneers were able to do so. He was associated with the Mulgrave Central Mill and a Director since its erection and was a Director until his retirement in July 1927.

On 5th of September, 1927, the directors of the Mulgrave Central Mill held a meeting to do honor to Mr Gordon. At that meeting the then Chairman, the late Mr A. J. Draper, presented Mr Gordon with a very handsomely framed set of photos of the mill and the Board of Directors. The accompanying address recalled the fact that Mr Gordon had settled in the district as far back as 1880, and that few men had worked harder for the progress of the district than he had done. The address said: "You have always been noted for your straightforward, upright character, and your charity and kindness to all with whom you have come in contact. Your word has ever been your bond. Our sincerest wish is that you may be spared a number of years, and enjoy at all times the health and pleasure you so richly deserve. We are not unmindful of the assistance you have always received from your wife, and

of the full-hearted manner in which she has supported your movements throughout your life. We ask you to convey to her our hearty good wishes, and trust she may, with you, enjoy the best of health and happiness in the future." (signed) A. J. Draper (Chairman), W. H. Warner, W. C. Griffin, John Cannon, George Alley, Wilson Irvin. In addition to the presentation to Mr Gordon, a gold wristlet watch was handed him by Mrs. Gordon, who, the speakers realized, had been at all times a great help to Mr Gordon during his career at Gordonvale.

The late John Gordon was a native of County Antrim, Ireland, and was born on May 12th, 1852. He was educated at the National School Broughshane, Antrim. At the age of 15 years he started life on his father's farm. In 1870 John set out and sailed on the ship Excelsior for Auckland. In 1872 he joined his brother in mining pursuits. When the Palmer River gold rush was on he came to Cooktown the year being 1874. At Cooktown with two other men they purchased horses and saddles and proceeded to the Palmer. His efforts at Palmer River were fairly successful and three years later he opened up a butchering business at Port Douglas, which at that time had just come into existence. Subsequently he sold out and commenced a similar business at Goldsborough with his cousin, Robert Gordon. Later

a similar business at Goldsborough with his cousin, Robert Gordon. Later he went to Pyramid about six miles from Gordonvale and started a butchering business in 1887. He carried on for ten years, and then removed to Gordonvale which was then known as Nelson. Later it was the desire of the Government to alter the name of Nelson in view of the similarity of Nelson in New Zealand. The Progress Association which then existed at this little township, realising the great pioneering work performed by John Gordon desired to show its appreciation to this worthy pioneer and suggested that the township be called Gordonvale. In 1896 John devoted his attention to sugar farming and ceased the butchering business. He was closely connected with the Mulgrave Mill venture from the days of the agitation for a mill. He was a founder and a director of this mill until his retirement in July, 1927. He was patriotic to the interests of the district. During the early days it was difficult to procure suitable labor for the cane fields, and John Gordon did his utmost to endeavoring to uphold the White Australia policy. He was described by many as the "Father of the

District." Right up till his retirement he took a very active interest in Freemasonry and was a member of the Progress Association and the School of Arts. He was a Past Master in the Pyramid Freemasonry Lodge No. 161. In 1901 he married Elizabeth Mary, daughter of the late John O'Byrne. Only a few years ago Mr Gordon disposed of his residence in Byrne Street, Gordonvale, and removed to Mt. Sophia about eight miles from Gordonvale. He then sold all his farming properties, and retired for the remainder of his life. He enjoyed good health until a few weeks ago, and on Monday morning, 4th March, he passed over the Great Divide.

The news of the passing of this popular pioneer was received with deep regret by his numerous friends. He was one of the sugar industry's best supporters. Vale John Gordon.