

**LOCKING THE MURRAY.
SIR HENRY GALWAY LAYS
THE FOUNDATION STONE
— of —
THE WILLIAM R. RANDALL
LOCK.**

**HISTORIC CEREMONY AT
BLANCHETOWN.**

On Friday night, June 4, Murray Bridge was invaded by a party of lawmakers, which included members of the National Parliament, as well as the lesser lights of the various State legislatures. The party, which travelled from Adelaide by special train, reached the Bridge at 9.30 p.m., and the train pulled up at the wharf, where the Gem Navigation Co.'s steamer, "Marion" (Capt. Smith), lay alongside, ready to take the lawmakers to Blanchetown, where arrangements had been made for His Excellency the Governor, Sir Henry Galway, to lay the foundation stone of the first lock on the Murray Locking Scheme.

His Excellency the Governor, who was accompanied by Mr. W. J. Gussion, travelled with the Parliamentary party on Friday night up the river from Murray Bridge, in the Gem Navigation Company's smart tourist steamer, the "Marion." Those on board included the Prime Minister (Right Hon. A. Fisher), the Federal Attorney-General (Hon. W. M. Hughes), the Premier of New South Wales (Hon. W. A. Holman), the Premier of South Australia (Hon. C. Vaughan), the Commissioner of Public Works (Hon. H. Jackson), the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. C. Goode), the Minister of Industry (Hon. R. P. Blundell), the Tasmanian Minister of Lands and Works (Hon. J. Belton), the President of the Legislative Council (Sir Lancelot Stirling), the Speaker of the House of Assembly (Hon. L. O'Loughlin), and legislators of the different States, as follows:—New South Wales: Hon. R. D. Meagher (Speaker of the Legislative Assembly), and Mr. J. D. Fitzgerald, M.L.C. Victoria: Mr. J. F. Hannan, M.H.R., Hon. R. B. Rees, M.L.C., and Mr. J. W. Billson, M.L.A. South Australia: The Leader of the Opposition (Sir Richard Butler, M.P.), the Hons. D. J. Gordon, J. G. Rice, F. S. Wallis, J. P. Wilson, J. Cowan, E. Lucas, and J. Jelley; Messrs. T. H. Smeaton, M.P., W. J. Denny, M.P., E. A. Anstey, M.P., I. MacGillivray, M.P., J. Chesson, M.P., P. Reidy, M.P., W. D. Ponder, M.P., J. Gunn, M.P., W. Hague, M.P., R. A. O'Connor, M.P., H. G. Tossell, M.P., L. L. Hill, M.P., J. L. Price, M.P., E. H. Coombe, M.P., J. A. Southwood, M.P., M. W. Parish, M.P., J. A. Dunn, M.P., and P. T. Heggaton (Chairman of the Railways Standing Committee). Western Australia: Mr. P. J. Burchell, M.H.R., and Mr. P. O'Loughlin, M.L.A. Tasmania: Senators Ready and Guy, and Mr. L. F. Giblin, M.L.A. Also pre-

mania: Senators Ready and Guy, and Mr. L. F. Giblin, M.L.A. Also present were the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Graham Stewart), and the Director of Irrigation (Mr. S. McIntosh). The Hon. R. P. Blundell had made admirable arrangements for the trip, and for the comfort of the party, his executive officer being the Director of the Tourist Bureau (Mr. Victor H. Ryan).

— A Delightful Trip. —

The "Marion's" skipper lost no time in getting his vessel under way, and as soon as the last passenger got aboard, refreshments were served for the early arrivals, the late ones making a second sitting. The vessel silently proceeded on its way, and the legislators safely negotiated their bunks, and slept the sleep of the just, confident that the skipper would pilot them through the tortuous of Australia's noblest stream in safety.

— Arrival at the Lock Site.

The "Marion" reached Blanchetown shortly before 3 p.m. on Saturday, and the party went ashore. On the banks were residents from Renmark, Paringa, Morgan, Berri, Loxton, Waikerie, Truro, Mannum, Angaston, and Blanchetown. Flags were flown in abundance. At the start of the proceedings the assembled school children sang, "Rule, Britannia," and "God Save the King." Close to the water's edge a platform had been erected by Mr. R. C. Cutting, the construction engineer for the lock, and on the township side of this the foundation stone was lying. Machinery and material for the undertaking reposed on the bank, most conspicuous being the parts ready to form the travelling head tower of the cableway, which will be 70 feet high. The river at the site is 600 feet wide. On the opposite bank two flags marked the position to be reached by the lock. A cableway tower will be erected there, and a flying-fox will travel across the stream with the material. The magnitude of the work can be appreciated when it is realised that it will include 20,000 cubic yards of concrete. The estimated time for the completion of the lock and weir is three years, but Mr. Cutting is hopeful of seeing it finished before that time has elapsed. The distinguished visitors were received with prolonged cheers.

— His Excellency's Address. —

His Excellency said: As Mr. Jackson remarked, this is a very notable day in the history of South Australia, and I am proud indeed that it should have fallen to my lot to be called upon to lay the first stone of the first lock of the River Murray locking system. It is to me a tremendous privilege, and I rather think that I have fluked into performing the ceremony. I wish in one sense the honour could have fallen to the lot of my illustrious predecessor, Sir Day Bosanquet, after the splendid work he did in this State. (Cheers.) From the Murray locking system a vast

he did in this State. (Cheers.) From the Murray locking system a vast deal is expected in connection with the future welfare of our State. The William R. Randell lock is one of six to be erected in South Australia, and one of a system of 35 locks in all. The potential benefits these locks are going to confer upon South Australia cannot well be calculated at this stage, but they are without doubt going to be very considerable. The success already obtained in the reclaimed areas below Mannum is a practical and encouraging example of the wealth that lies ahead of us, as represented by the Murray lands. If Charles Sturt could only be with us to-day his cup of satisfaction would be brimming over. It is 85 years now since that intrepid explorer unlocked to the world the largest river system in Australia. In that wonderful boat journey from the mouth of the Murrumbidgee to the sea and back, Sturt and his gallant companions rowed no less than 1700 miles—the longest boat journey on record. That was not the only record in the explorer's great achievement. It was the cheapest bit of exploring work ever done, and cost the Government £266, less 7d., an example of rigid economy that I am sure will appeal to Ministers! (Laughter.)

— Fertile Murray Lands. —

These locks, once constructed, will ensure sufficient water both for navigation and irrigation purposes. The Murray settlers are a fine type of colonist, who, given the chance, will make things hum. (Cheers.) The Murray lands are very fertile, provided sufficient water is available for

irrigation purposes. The possibilities are enormous. It is estimated that over 600,000 acres can be reclaimed and irrigated on the Murray banks within the South Australian boundary. During the late drought, which, thank God, is a memory of the past, the reclaimed areas between Mannum and Tailem Bend were veritable oases in the desert, and yet they are only a beginning of what is confidently looked for. As Mr. David Gordon stated in his excellent publication, "The Nile of Australia," the arid nature of Australia is caricatured by uninformed people. There are many rivers in this great continent whose waters are waiting to be put into use in order that the producer, and thereby trade, may benefit enormously. The harnessing of this great stream is about to be commenced by the erection of this lock, one of a carefully thought out system. The Murray is, we hope, going to come into its own by at last playing the part it was meant to in developing the States through which it flows; and it is a matter of great gratification to two of the three States concerned that the Governments of those States have come to a determination to put, if possible, the waters of this mighty river to their best uses, so that each

possible, the waters of this mighty river to their best uses, so that each State shall be benefited therefrom to the utmost. (Cheers.) The happy agreement come to by the States referred to is greatly strengthened from the fact that the wise statesmanship which formulated the Murray waters scheme has the strong support of the Federal Government. (Cheers.) The scheme, may, therefore, be said to be national, and in that happy fact you have the keystone of the future success of the great undertaking we are putting into motion to-day. (Hear, hear.) As the locks are erected, and as this grand stream is bitied and bridled, and got under control, new provinces will spring up, and the now waste lands of this vast Commonwealth will be converted, as time goes on, into green pastures, wheat lands, and orchards, inhabited by a virile race of progressive and prosperous people. (Cheers.)

— Grit of Australia's Sons. —

The faith to do and dare which inspired Charles Sturt and the old pioneers of Australia still animates the hearts of their descendants, the men and women of to-day, and with that knowledge we look with confidence to splendid successes resulting from the efforts now being made to develop the great watershed of the Murray River. To satisfy ourselves that the grit of the makers and founders of this beautiful land has been handed down to their sons and their sons' sons to-day, we have only to look to the Dardanelles, where Australia's manhood has covered itself with glory and renown that will be imperishable, and will form a glorious and inspiring chapter in the history of the British Empire. (Prolonged cheers.) And how proud we are of our soldiers and sailors, whose gallantry and fortitude might well form the subject of an epic poem such as Homer's Iliad—which Iliad, too, was written in connection with the Siege of Troy, an ancient town situated not very far from where our men are now driving the Turkish host out of Europe.

— The State's Best Asset. —

In conclusion, I would express, if I may, my humble commendation that the Murray locking system has been so arranged that every possible benefit shall be secured, not only for irrigation, but also for navigation. By that arrangement, not only will waste lands be turned into fertile fields, but also the natural waterway of a vast area will be used as the trade route it was intended for. The Murray is South Australia's greatest asset, and we now rejoice in the hope that it is about to be fully developed. (Cheers.)

— The Foundation Stone. —

His Excellency then tapped the stone with the mallet, and declared it to be well and truly laid, to the accompaniment of ringing cheers. The inscription reads:

This stone marking the site

The inscription reads:

This stone, marking the site of the William R. Randell lock, was laid by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Henry Lionel Galway, K.C.M.G., D.S.O., on the occasion of the visit of members of the Parliaments of Australia, June 5, 1915.

The Premier (Hon. Crawford Vaughan), in moving a vote of thanks to the Governor for having performed the ceremony, congratulated His Excellency upon having taken a leading part in what would by future generations be regarded as an historic event. The Premier gave an elaborate resume of the efforts of various Governments in connection with proposals to utilise the waters of the Murray, and the various agreements which had been drawn up.

— Scope for Intense Culture. —

At the present time South Australia had no less than 25,906 acres along the valley of the Murray under intense culture, and if the proposed and possible areas that could be brought under channels between the boundary and the Murray mouth were included, they had a grand total of 359,554 acres was reached. Last year, when the low state of the river threatened the settlements with ruin, improvised sand-bag embankments had to be built, to store fresh water for the pumping plant at Mildura, Renmark, Waikerie, and Berri. Lower down the river the people had to be content with watering their lucerne with salt water, trusting to the leaching process of high rivers to take the salt out of the soil.

— A River Fresh and Full. —

It would be seen, then, that South Australia was making no empty boast when she preached the gospel of irrigation, and earnestly requested the other States to come into line with her in the development of this Nile of Australia. (Cheers.) Lake Victoria was a natural storage basin, which, with the trifling expenditure of less than £200,000, could be made to store 22,000,000,000 cubic feet of water, which was only one-third less than the capacity of Burrinjuck itself. Lake Barmera, or Bonney, offered itself as another storage basin, which the construction of locks would enable them to utilise, and each lock would throw back the water to a height of ten feet, thus keeping the river fresh and full for many months longer than it otherwise could be. At the same time, they must never forget that a locked river, though of inestimable value for irrigation purposes, could be made navigable to boats drawing 6ft. 6in. on considerably less than one-seventh of the quantity of water that was now required. The Government were considering also the advisability of following the example shown by the Dutch in the reclamation of the Zuyder Zee, by reclaiming Lakes Albert and Alexandrina as far as practicable. (Cheers.)

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— The Murray's Mighty Destiny. —

It would be invidious to particularise the efforts of any particular past Minister in the work of utilising the waters of the Murray. Among those who had taken a leading part in the deliberations in this matter were the Hon. J. H. Howe, Mr. Simpson Newland, the late Tom Price, Mr. Justice Gordon, Sir Richard Butler, the Hon. A. H. Peake, the Hon. J. Verran, and last, but not least, the Hon. P. McM. Glynn and the Hon. David Gordon, whose labours in the cause of the development of the River Murray had been unceasing. (Cheers.) Just as the turning of the sod on the East-West line bore witness to the future development of the interior of Australia's vast continent, the ceremony that day at Blanchetown opened the door to the future utilisation of the resources of the Murray. It ushered in a new era of activity and enterprise. The imagination could scarcely conceive the future that awaited Australia when these placid waters were harnessed to man's use. Then would the solitary places be made glad, and the desert blossom as the

rose. For what the Tiber was to old Rome, what the Mississippi was to America, what the Nile was to Egypt, this and more he believed the Murray was destined to be to generations of Australians yet unborn. (Cheers.)

— Prime Minister's Remarks. —

The Prime Minister (Hon. A. Fisher), said that he hoped no available opportunity would be lost by the State or Federal Parliaments to prevent the waste they had heard so much about, whether there were differences of opinion between sections of the Australian people or not. It was an economic waste that could not be justified, either to themselves or to any other part of the world. Without entering into any political controversy, he might say that 25 years ago he was one of a number who had tried to draft a political platform, and the second plank of that platform was "conservation of water, and irrigation." He would use all his influence, and would even abet those who were desirous of utilising the bounteous rains that fell either in South Australia or any other State, if it would increase the prosperity of the people. (Cheers.) It was with the greatest of pleasure that he thanked His Excellency for laying in position the foundation stone of the first Murray lock. (Cheers.)

— Mr. Holman's Views. —

Mr. Holman (Premier of N.S.W.) said that the Mother State stood to benefit as much by the Murray locking scheme as did South Australia. He detailed what had been done in New South Wales in regard to irriga-

He detailed what had been done in New South Wales in regard to irrigation and water conservation, and in concluding congratulated His Excellency and South Australia on the day's great event. It was an event that would be looked upon by His Excellency in years to come, and by himself also, as something with which they were pleased to have their names connected. It was, without a doubt, a step in the greatest and most beneficent of public undertakings that had ever been carried out in Australia. Those pioneers who had made it possible, and who had worked so hard to bring it about, deserved the warmest congratulations on their unflagging industry and spirit. Looking back over the whole period of her history, he could see no single moment when Australia was confronted with so gigantic a step forward in material development as that which they had witnessed. (Cheers.)

— Victorian Legislators. —

Mr. Billson, M.L.A. (Victoria) said no disagreement, however grave, could justify the folly of allowing facilities for navigation and irrigation to go to waste, thus leaving people destitute of those opportunities which they could have, were the forces of nature harnessed for the use of man. He trusted that the results of the agreement would be all that was anticipated by the framers.

Hon. R. B. Rees, M.L.C. (Victoria) said he was present to express the hope that the work now being inaugurated to conserve the water might be carried right through, and that it would tend, as he knew it would, to the development of the great Murray Valley, adding to the wealth of the whole district in that reach of the river between Mildura and Echuca. (Cheers.) It would probably prove more for the people of Victoria than any other work now in progress or in sight. (Cheers.)

— What Water Did for California. —

The Federal Attorney-General remarked that he felt like a superfluous supernumerary on that platform, as he came, at best, but to echo the sentiments of those gentlemen who had preceded him. Any man who had had the privilege of coming up the river, and seeing it for the first time, as he had that day, could but rejoice from the bottom of his heart to think that the natural possibilities that had been passing the doors of the people for ages were at length to be made use of. (Cheers.) They were at the beginning of a new chapter of Australian history—a chapter that was to introduce quite a new era. The Murray would do for Australia what the Nile had done for Egypt. When the Nile was low the land around was a desert, but when the river ran high the same land was a Garden of Eden. All that water had done for Colorado, Arizona, and California it would do in South Australia. His Excellency had accomplished his great work in

had accomplished his great work in a way exquisitely worthy of the action, and he was privileged to support the vote of thanks in his favour. (Cheers.)

— Sir Richard Butler. —

Sir Richard Butler, in thanking His Excellency for placing in position the stone that would fix the site of the William R. Randell Lock, said that nothing in his public career of nearly a quarter of a century would give him greater pleasure than the acceptance and ratification of an agreement arrived at after over 50 years of discussion. The conference he attended in Melbourne last year was the second at which he had been present as a representative of South Australia. The first was with Mr. J. G. Jenkins, and the last with Mr. Peake. As probably was the case with the other representatives, they did not get all they would have liked. He thought, however, that after last year's conference there was a unanimous opinion that the lines agreed on should be accepted. He thought Mr. Holman, who had been present at that conference, would agree with that. In fact, he had given evidence of it by passing the Bill embodying the agreement through the New South Wales Parliament, without amendment, and he wished to say how much he appreciated the attitude adopted by Mr. Griffith, then Minister for Public Works in New South Wales, at the conference. (Cheers.) The petty parochialism of the Melbourne "Age" was anathema to him, and he seemed to bring to bear on any proposal a mind determined to take a broad, national view, and to regard the question as one altogether apart from mere State boundaries. Mr. W. A. Watt and his colleagues were also anxious to see finality reached.

— Action Better Than Words. —

The Commissioner of Public Works conveyed the thanks of the gathering to the Governor, and in response His Excellency said he would watch the progress of the work with the greatest interest and sympathy. In connection with the Murray lands, which would be parcelled out by degrees, he only hoped that the Government would have some scheme by which the splendid men now fighting for King and Empire would be able to get land on easy terms. (Cheers.)

A Voice—Let it be given to them! (Cheers.)

His Excellency said he would be prepared to second that. Some of the men who would be invalidated home through wounds or sickness might be glad to take up work on that land under favourable terms, and what more fitting reward could be given to them? (Cheers.) One of the Victorian speakers had pointed out that South Australia herself had not yet ratified the agreement. South Australia, however, had actually begun the promised work before bringing the Bill forward, and an ounce of action was worth a ton of words.

ing the Bill forward, and an ounce of action was worth a ton of words. (Laughter and cheers.)

At the conclusion of the ceremony the crowd gave renewed cheers for the Governor, the Prime Minister, the Premier, and the Australian heroes on Gallipoli.

The party re-embarked on the "Marion," and on arriving at Mannum Sir Henry Galway left the vessel and returned to the city by motor. As he stepped ashore the party sang the National Anthem. As the "Marion" continued on its downward course, brief stoppages were made at the various reclamation areas, including Cowood, Neeta, Myppolonga, Monteith, and Wood's Point. On Sunday evening a sacred concert, presided over by the Prime Minister, was held. The proceedings began with

the united singing of a "Litany for Our Army and Navy"—

"God of our fathers, at whose call
We now before Thy footstool fall;
Whose grace hath made our Empire
strong,
Through love of right, and hate of
wrong,
In this dark hour we plead with Thee
For Britain's cause on land and sea."

This was followed by the rendering of well known hymns, and solos and instrumental numbers and recitations suitable to the occasion.

About 2 a.m. on Monday the vessel stuck her nose into a mudbank, but after an hour or so she was got off, and continued the voyage until the mouth was reached, and the voyage ended. The party boarded the train at Goolwa, and reached Adelaide about 11.30 p.m. Everyone expressed themselves as charmed with the scenery of the river, which was a revelation to many of them.