

SOLDIERS AS CITIZENS.

RICHMOND MEMORIAL HALL OPENED.

A fine memorial hall in Church-street, Richmond, was opened on Tuesday by Senator Elliott. There was a large attendance of returned soldiers and their relatives and friends. The hall is a substantial brick structure, and cost £3500. It would have cost at least another £1000 but for the fact that Mr. F. M'Mahon, Richmond council's building surveyor, designed and supervised its erection free of charge. The main hall will accommodate 600 people. In addition, club and committee rooms are provided on the second story. There was some opposition when it was first proposed to erect the hall, but the council advanced £3500, and subsequently £1600 was raised by public appeals. The money necessary to furnish the hall (including the provision of four billiard tables) was also subscribed by a number of donors.

Senator Elliott was introduced to the gathering by the mayor (Cr. A. F. Fear).

In declaring the hall open, Senator Elliott congratulated "his comrades" at Richmond on their possession of such a fine building. He also congratulated the mayor and citizens on their generosity in providing the necessary money for its erection. It was a pleasure for him to know that the revenue that the hall would bring in would be such that its maintenances would not be any cost on the citizens generally. It would provide a place where returned men could meet for social and intellectual purposes without any of the temptations incidental to such meetings at hotels. (Applause.)

The keys of the hall were handed over to Mr. H. Crisp (president of Richmond R.S.A.) by the ex-mayor (Cr. M. M. Joyce), who stated that although there had at first been a division of opinion as to the wisdom of erecting the hall, all parties now were working harmoniously. He advised the soldiers to conduct the hall on a business footing, so as to be able to provide a sinking fund to repay the council the money advanced.

Major Forrest (secretary of Federal executive R.S.A.) apologised for the absence of Mr. G. J. C. Dyett (president). He eulogised ex-mayor Cr. M. Joyce, whose energies, he said, had been mainly responsible for the erection of the hall.

Mr. A. M. David (secretary of the Victorian branch) said the hall would stand as a memorial to the 60,000 Australians who fell in the war. He had just returned from a trip to the northern part of Victoria. He had been in the special train that had toured that area. They had covered 1000 miles by train and 500 by motor. He had been amazed at what he had seen. The thousands of successful soldier settlers at Red Cliffs and other districts were one of the greatest assets that a nation could possess. (Applause.) They had carried into their enterprises the courage and initiative that had made them famous as soldiers. It was another proof, if such were needed, that returned men generally were prepared to recognise their responsibilities as citizens in peace as well as war. (Applause.)