

£3000 Building

New Shire Office at Clifton

Opening Ceremony Performed By Mr. E. M. Hanlon

CLIFTON, Sunday.—The new Shire Council Office at Clifton was officially opened by the Minister for Health and Home Affairs (Mr. E. M. Hanlon) on Saturday at noon, in the presence of a large number of residents of the shire. Erection of the new office marks the most progressive step taken by the council in the last 50 years. The building stands at the intersection of King-street (named after King, of King and Sibley, who were closely associated with closer settlement on the Downs) and Meara Place (named by the present council after the Chairman, Cr. James Meara, of Millbrook, Clifton, who has been a member of the council for 27 years continuously and has for 24 years been chairman, under three different forms of franchise) and constitutes a notable landmark on the Clifton Highway. The historical association of the Clifton shire with development of the Darling Downs was brought out by the Minister when he revealed that the original shire, then known as the Clifton Divisional Board, was one of the first gazetted in Queensland, and its first territory was from Drayton to a few miles north of Warwick, or practically the whole of the land between Toowoomba and Warwick, with the exclusion of the then municipality of Allora.

The new Shire Office has been dedicated to the memory of the pioneers of the Darling Downs, and monumental stones bearing inscriptions stating the fact are embodied in the structure.

Those present included Mr. Jeremiah Collins, of Allora, who is 92. Mr. Collins was chairman of the Clifton Divisional Board 40 years ago. Another notable figure, though one not directly connected with the Local Government bodies, was Mr. Walter Jackson, of Nobby, who is 95.

The new building is constructed of brick with a tile roof, and is a handsome edifice. The main entrance is at the corner of King-street and Meara Place and wings of the building extend

the corner of King-street and Meara Place and wings of the building extend along frontages to both these streets forming an L-shaped structure.

At the official opening ceremony Cr. Meara, in welcoming Mr. Hanlon, said the cost of the new building was £3000, obtained by Government subsidy loan. One fifth was paid by the Government. Interest and redemption was £277 per year. Of this the Government relieved the council of one-fifth, or approximately £55. The council was committed to repayment of £221 annually for a period of 15 years. The rate required to meet this was one-seventh of a penny in the £ over the shire.

Mr. Hanlon congratulated the council on its progressive step. As there was no more important business in Clifton than that carried on by the Shire Council it was fitting they should have this better type of office. The advent of the motor car had seriously affected the small country towns. Small towns could survive only by making conditions attractive and keeping their towns alive; otherwise with motor conveyance available people would go to other places. The same applied throughout the Downs. They must give the same service as the larger cities. He often wondered why the country people in Australia for so long allowed the cities to have the benefits and comforts and all the amenities of life. Those days were gone and country people must demand the same treatment as the city. After this war he believed they would see the country towns coming more into their own and getting back the position which was theirs earlier. Sanitation, better roads, cheap electricity, and conditions which made life attractive would be the lot of the country people. If they have this they would be able to stand up against the polluted conditions of the city. He voiced personal regret at the absence through illness of Mr. W. A. Deacon, M.L.A., for Cunningham, with whom he had enjoyed a personal friendship in Parliament for many years. In declaring the office opened Mr. Hanlon expressed the hope that Clifton would continue to advance.

Cr. Meara presented a gold mounted tobacco pouch to the Minister on behalf of the council. The pouch bore the inscription: Hon. E. M. Hanlon, M.L.A., Opening Council Chambers, Clifton, 20/9/1941.

Cr. Meara unveiled a stone on the King-street wall, erected to the memory of the pioneers of the Darling Downs. The inscription read: "To perpetuate the memory of Alan Cun-

perpetuate the memory of Alan Cunningham, discoverer of Darling Downs, June, 1827; Patrick Leslie and associate founders of first settlement June, 1840. This stone was unveiled by Cr. James Meara, chairman of the Clifton Shire Council, on September 20, 1941.