

DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL. The Official Opening

On Monday, November 1, the official opening of the Dandenong District School took place, and was attended by a large number of residents of the town and surrounding district.. Beautiful weather prevailed, and helped to make the proceedings bright and pleasant for all. The interior of the High school was neatly decorated, and the Union Jacks displayed were appropriate tokens of loyalty. The function was well managed, and passed off most successfully under the guidance of the Rev. H. A. Buntine, chairman of the School council.

The afternoon's programme opened with the Australian hymn, sung by the scholars, after which Mr Buntine stated that apologies for non-attendance had been received from Cr Wilson (president of the shire). Rev. H S Heath, B A, and Capt. Bruce, M H.R.

There was never a more important event in Dandenong (said Mr Buntine), than the building and official opening of the High school, which was a national work, for in the years to come thousands of scholars would pass through the school seeking knowledge, and they all knew that knowledge was power. He was pleased at the attendance of Mr Groves, member for the district, who regularly attended to his duties. He expected that Capt. Bruce would also attend, but that gentleman had intimated that he never attended such functions, anywhere; but he (the speaker) considered that Capt. Bruce should have made it his business to be present, and, if he could not take enough interest to do so, well, they would have to find someone who would.

Mr Tate and Mr Hansen had inspected the building, and it had been pointed out that necessary work had yet to be carried out; he hoped it would be agreed to. The school had been built to accommodate 150 scholars; that number attended now, and it was expected there would be an additional 50 next year. The present accommodation was excellent, but insufficient, and they desired that it be extended.

Mr Tate, Director of Education, said he rejoiced with the people at the official opening of the Dandenong District High school, which was not only a good thing for the scholars who attended it, but was a good proposition for the business people in the town. The building of High schools was really a national question, and, in regard to Dandenong, the staff was not only excellent and highly qualified, but included two men who had done good work with the A I F. (Applause)

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During the war, many men from the department had gone to the war-and there was not a better fighting force, than the A I F.-but those men would' not have done so well had they not been magnificently led. Leaders were needed in all departments, in State affairs and legislation, the churches, in. Industrial matters, and schools such as they now had in Dandenong aimed at training the leaders of the future No country on the face of the earth had such opportunities as they had in Australia. Already we had people from humble surroundings having risen to such positions as to become members of the Supreme Court Bench. The judicial Bench today comprised at least six men who were at one time attending State schools, and had proved themselves men of high character and integrity Others had attained high positions in the medical profession, the clergy, and as engineers. Thus it would be seen that the scholars had a fine opportunity, for they not only had a splendid school building, but a well equipped staff-in fact, in that respect, they were more fortunate than people living nearer Melbourne. The development of the country rested upon 'the intellectual and spiritual development of the future men and women of the State, such as -they had in the scholars before them that afternoon, and it was for parents to give their children' every opportunity-which he felt: they' were desirous of doing. The course provided at the school was one of six years, commencing at 12 years of age, the intermediate course occupying four years, but he wished to point out clearly that unless parents intended that their children should remain at the school until they had obtained the intermediate certificate-far better not to send them at all Residents had a responsibility in regard to the school; first, it must be kept full of scholars, and they must also see that the playing field was properly laid out, and that gardens were made. He advised parents to allow their children to have the full course which could be obtained at the school. He had to apologise for the absence of Mr Hutchinson (late Minister of Education), who had assisted in getting the High school built at Dandenong. In conclusion, he had pleasure in declaring the High school open for instruction, and he hoped, in the future, it would be the means of turning out many successful boys and girls who would benefit the community generally. (Applause).

Professor Smith also gave a most interesting address, but space does not permit of a full report. He expressed the pleasure he felt at being present at the opening of such a fine building, and would impress upon them the fact that the High school had a splendid staff, in fact although there were more important schools in the State, such schools did not have a better staff than the school at Dandenong. He wished them to fully realise that, especially as. they were taking part in a world-wide movement in regard to the opening of High schools. He would remind them that in England and Wales it was being made compulsory to attend school up to 18 years of age, and that England was opening her eyes

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and creating a proper democracy. Speaking generally, there was an uprising of the people, who were not going to continue as in the past in regard to educational matters. They wanted boys and girls to leave school at 18, and not at 14 years-in order that they might become more intelligent better citizens.

During the war, at which the A.I.F. had done so well, we had promised to do our best for the rising generation, which made him think of the schools and their work in the future.

Mr Hansen, chief secretary of the department, also gave an instructive address, and at the conclusion presented certificates (won at the recent Associated High schools sports carnival, held at Warragul), to the following: T Standish, H. Randall, D. Harvey, and at. Buckley. Mr Hansen endorsed the remarks of the previous speakers, and expressed the hope that the parents would take an active interest in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the High school. .

Mr Frank Groves, ML A., moved a hearty vote of thanks to the previous speakers, and availed himself of the opportunity to refer to the great national service rendered to the State by Mr Hutchinson (late Minister of Education), whose absence he very much regretted. Cr Abbott (Dandenong shire) and Cr a'Beckett (Berwick shire) supported the vote of thanks. which was carried with acclamation.--Mr Tate briefly responded. Afternoon tea was provided by a committee of ladies, and nicely served by the scholars.

Under the baton of Mr Brooks, B A, the scholars rendered a couple of acceptable items during the afternoon's programme. Many of those present availed themselves of the opportunity to inspect the interior of the school building. and general satisfaction was expressed at the manner in which in all details had been provided by the education authorities, upon which the head teacher (Mr Langford) received many congratulations".