

WAR MEMORIAL HALL OPENED AT NORMANBY

No one could see the hall without feeling that a great deal of thought, effort and sacrifice had gone into the building, which was delightfully proportioned and presented, said the Minister of Maori Affairs, Mr. Corbett, opening the Normanby and district memorial town hall on Saturday.

Mr. Corbett said the present conception of halls as memorials had a great deal to commend it in an age where there was a considerable amount of leisure time. The centre helped the moulding of youth and gave an opportunity to develop character, which was a very worthwhile way of commemorating the sacrifice of men who had fallen. Here was a chance to co-ordinate the efforts of the community into doing something really worthwhile.

The Minister warned that the hall must never be treated as purely an amenity for the district. The primary purpose was to mark the sacrifice made for New Zealand and future generations.

He congratulated those who had had the foresight and drive to carrying the project through and those who responded to the appeal made. He hoped the hall would be a rallying centre for the district and that by the rubbing of shoulders there ideas would be exchanged to contribute to the advancement of the district and the spirit of the people.

Mr. Corbett declared the hall officially open following a short prayer of dedication.

The chairman of the Normanby Town Board, Mr. R. I. Ellison, said it was four years and four days since the old town hall was lost by fire. The people of Normanby had banded together, and a queen carnival cleared £5300 in 10 short weeks. There had been many difficulties for the board to overcome in the past four years. The original plans were found to be far too expensive, and many weeks of discussions and recommendations followed until at last the work had been started.

The former member of Parliament for the district, Mr. W. A. Sheat, had done a marvellous job for the hall, for the application for the subsidy went forward several weeks after the closing date, and he fought well to get it through.

MARVELLOUS EFFORT

It was a red-letter day for Normanby, said the chairman of the Hawera County Council, Mr. P. J. Clement. Normanby had at last got its hall, and it had worked for it. It was a marvellous effort.

The deputy chairman of the town board, Mr. B. Mauriri, speaking on behalf of the Maori people of the district, said there had been "a lot of fun" during the carnival and some dissension during the planning stages, but he asked people to forget that and co-operate with the board now in making the opening really happy.

The former chairman of the town board, Mr. D. A. Stewart, during whose term the planning was begun, said the opening was "a momentous occasion in the history of the people of Normanby." Not only had a new hall been opened, but the sacrifice of the men who fell in the war had been honoured. He referred also to the builder, Mr. A. J. Moore, Eltham, and the architect, Mr. G. Laurenson, Hawera.

On behalf of the present town board, Mr. Stewart appealed to residents to help in providing requirements for the new hall. "This is your hall, and if you pull together and help the town board, you will have a hall that will make you proud to think you belong to Normanby," he said.

An opening dance was held at night.

Yesterday a combined church service was held at the hall to mark its opening. It was organised by the Hawera Ministers' Association.

The hall itself is 70 feet by 40 feet, with a stage 10 feet deep. There are also supper room, kitchen, dressing rooms and conveniences. The total cost was about £13,000. Besides the £5300 raised by the queen carnival, a Government subsidy was obtained and insurance money paid after the loss of the old hall was spent.