

Waimate Daily Advertiser. 28 May 1915 (Papers Past) [17/05/2022]

WAIMATE ENLISTERS.

SEND-OF'F SOCIAL

Last night the Oddfellows' Hall was filled by about 3000 wellwishers and friends of those who are on the eve of departing from this district for Trentham, there to undergo training ere proceeding to the front. A score of "recruits" were present. The function was arranged by the Scottish Society the Pipe Band, the Hon. Territorials and the Defence Rifle Club and was the first really public recognition of departing volunteers tendered in Waimate and in all probability will not be the last. The proceedings were characterised by both enthusiasm and earnestness. The various speakers spoke out of the fulness of their hearts, and the audience were by no means backward in their expression of approval of the sentiments given utterance to.

The deputy-Mayor (Dr Hayes) presided, and read an apology from the Mayor (who is President of the Hon. Territorials), regretting that unforeseen circumstances necessitated his absence. In the course of his letter His Worship stated that Waimate had not been backward in supplying its quota of young men required for service in fighting a cruel and unscrupulous foe, and concluded by wishing the young soldiers a pleasant time at Trentham, a successful campaign, and a safe return. Mr R. D. Norrie, one of the enlisters, also apologised for absence, owing to previous arrangements.

The deputy-Mayor, in speaking of Mr Francis's absence, spoke of the honour conferred on that gentleman, and through him, on Waimate itself, in that his abilities as an organiser had been recognised, and he was now on his way to Samoa on behalf of the New Zealand Government. Toast "The King" by the chairman.

Song, "Long live the King," Mr J. W. Manchester.

Mr Pitcaithly then gave an address in the course of which he expressed his appreciation of the honour done to him in addressing the gallant young fellows who had come forward at their country and Empire's call, for never was a call so urgent. Britain never needed help more than at present when she was fighting for her life, against an attack at once cunning, cruel and deliberate — an attack against the liberties of Europe. The war was a deliberate attempt to overthrow the British Empire, for which Germany had waited long. Germany so far had had rather the best of it and the Allies had not yet entered Germany, and before that could be accomplished Britain must have more men, and was now calling on her sons to rally round the Old Flag that waved for Freedom and Honour. Our response was the sending of gallant young fellows such as those before him, many of whom he knew, to uphold that Flag. They must realise it was no picnic they were going to, but a position of dangers and responsibilities. Moreover, it was such young fellows who made England strong. More men were wanted, and it was the duty of every able-bodied man to go. He concluded an earnest and forcible address by saying were he fit he would go, and if the necessity arose, his body might come in as a "sand-bag." (Laughter).

At this stage supper, which was ably catered for by Mr Barford, was served, the members of the Pipe Band acting most efficiently as waiters. During supper-time Miss Strachan played various national airs, some of which were "accompanied" by the audience.

Song, Mr Hay: "Are we down-hearted? No!" and, responding to encore, "The Minstrel Boy." The toast "Navy and Army" was proposed by Mr Hume, who referred to our boys on the Navy, also to the assistance we had rendered by giving the ship "New Zealand." He drew a strong contrast between the British and German methods of sea-warfare and life-saving, to the everlasting shame and disgrace of the latter. The blast of war had awakened the enthusiasm of our boys and though many would doubtless return enfeebled and maimed, the country would everlastingly appreciate the service they so freely gave.

Song Mrs Nicholas, "The Sea of England's Glory," (encored).

Mr E. C. Studholme replied on behalf of the Navy, and speaking of the Kaiser said of him he was the Kaiser of a Kiel Canal fleet, not of the navy. He made a strong and vigorous speech, pointing out the necessity for rendering all the help one could and expressed the hope that our politicians would follow the lead of the Mother Country and sink all differences. In closing he quoted Tennyson's "Britons, hold your own!"

Lieut. Fitch replied for the Army whose motto he said was "No Surrender," and he doubted not that our boys in France and Flanders and the Dardanelles would live up to it. He said that these men going to the front deserved more honour than those who had gone before as the former had no reports of killed and wounded to influence their action, whereas the present and future volunteers could fully recognise their liability.

Recitation, "The Day," Mr Strachan.

Selection, the Pipe Band.

Toast "The Guests of the Evening," proposed by Dr Hayes, and spoken to also by Mr Black. The Chairman said that Nelson's signal never appealed more strongly to the nation than today. He referred to the New Zealanders at the Dardanelles, and assured the guests they were not going on an ordinary adventure, but to fight for the existence of the Empire, and avenge the atrocities of Belgium and the Lusitania. Waimate was proud of them.

Mr Black spoke briefly and to the point assuring the young men that their fellow-citizens appreciated their action, and that the hearts of those left would go with them.

Song, Mr M. Cochrane, Senr., (an original composition).

Mr H. Hawke replied to the toast on behalf of self, and fellow volunteers, saying they could not foresee their fate or the future, but they hoped to uphold the honour of their country, and bring back a record second to none, whether they gained Victoria Crosses or not.

Toast, The Ladies, proposed by Mr Strachan.

Song,, "Tipperary," Mr Fulton.

Mr Geo. Mackenzie replied in historical terms to the toast of the ladies.

Mr E. J. Atwill proposed the toast of "The Boys who have left," in earnest and heartfelt words, alluding to the wave of industry now going on among the women of the country knitting for the boys at the Front. He referred to the old "Victory" and her associations and again reminded his hearers of Nelson's signal.

The Chairman made an appeal to the audience to keep the boys at the front in heart by sending letters and newspapers to them.

Sergt.-Major Johnstone replied to the toast, and spoke of the wish of the staff officers to go to the front, who were debarred by the necessity of being retained to drill the volunteers. He said that the quota, contributed by Waimate district now ranged from 12 to 15 per month, not including some 60 away with Expeditionary Force.

Mr Hume called for three cheers for the Chairman, which were heartily responded to.

The general arrangements for the evening were in the capable hands of Mr E. Hislop Jamieson, whose courtesy we acknowledge.