

SOLDIERS' PEACE BALL.
BRILLIANT FUNCTION AT GERALDINE.

(Contributed.)

The Peace Ball given by the members of the Home and Empire League to welcome the return of the soldiers to the Geraldine district, took place on Thursday, October 9th, at the Volunteer Hall, and was a brilliant function. The committee were fortunate in securing a calm evening, with a beautiful full moon, for as large numbers were expected it was found necessary to serve supper in three relays of two hundred each in the Parish Hall, and the little walk between the two buildings was much appreciated by all. The decorating committee are to be congratulated on the very effective way they had transformed the hall into a charming ball room — the long bare walls had been camouflaged with screens of netting, filled with bush greenery and quantities of flowers. The colour scheme was mauve, pink, and gold. Long chains of lycopodium were suspended from the lights to all corners of the room, from which hung trails of wistaria and golden spring flowers in baskets, the stage had been converted into a comfortable drawing-room, and decorated with great jars of pink fruit blossom and hanging wistaria. Extra sitting out accommodation was provided by a long canvas gallery, built on to one side of the hall, and decorated with greenery, ferns, and coloured Japanese lanterns. This and the stage provided comfortable accommodation for those who wished to look on at the pretty scene, and prevented the ball room being too congested.

The Hospitality Committee had endeavoured to get into touch with every man who had enlisted from the districts covered by the work of the League, and many had come from a great distance to join in the re-union. All parents of soldiers were invited, and a free nomination was given to each man for a lady friend. In addition to this 200 tickets were available for sale, so great speculation took place as to the numbers likely to be present.

By 8.30 the room was completely filled, and everyone was rejoiced to see such numbers of men wearing the badge of honour of the R.S.A. Regret was expressed at the absence of the Mayor and Mayoress of Temuka, who had been invited, but the League were glad to see two well known returned soldiers from that town.

Colonel Mackenzie, as senior officer for the district, and chairman of the County Council, briefly spoke of the work undertaken by the League throughout the war, and extended a very warm welcome to the returned soldiers on behalf of its members. Major J. S. Barker returned thanks for the soldiers, and spoke of the value the League had been to the men at the front, both in material help, and as a moral force always behind them. Immediately afterwards Mr de Lautour's band from Timaru struck up the National Anthem, in which the whole room joined. Mrs Hislop, the President, being still fully occupied in welcoming the guests, the grand march was led by the Mayor of Geraldine and Mrs Kennedy, followed by Major Kennedy, chairman of the Patriotic Society, and Mrs Macdonald. Major J. M. Barker, senior returned officer, followed with his mother, who was always a very prominent worker on behalf of the League.

At the close of the third dance, Col. Mackenzie asked all branch presidents and secretaries, and those entitled to them, to come on to the platform and receive the badges and certificates issued by the Red Cross Society. These were presented by Mrs Hislop to the following: -

Woodbury Branch — President. Mrs Sharpe; Secretary. Mrs J. M. Barker.

Four Peaks - Secretary, Mrs Richards.

Pleasant Valley – Secretary. Mrs Vucetich.

Kakahu Secretary. Miss Thomson.

Gapes Valley – Secretary. Mrs P. Barker.

Geraldine — Secretary. Miss Logan; President. Mrs Hislop.

Orari Gorge – Secretary. Mrs Blakiston.

Peel Forest — Secretary. Mrs W. Barker; President. Mrs J. M. H. Tripp.

Rangitata - Secretary. Mrs Priddle.

Oran Bridge - Secretary. Miss McLean.

Secretary' Our Boys' Depot - Mr Heron. Organisers - Mrs Cliff. Mrs W. A. Sheratt. G.F.S. — Mrs Staples Hamilton.

At the conclusion Mrs Tripp came forward and said she also had a very pleasant ceremony to perform, and she was proud to say she represented the members of the Home and Empire League, for they stood for all that was best and most unselfish in the community. They had stood together united and strong for the whole period of the war, and it was their unanimous desire to place on record the affection and admiration they felt for Mrs Hislop as their leader and president. That she had occupied this position for years testified to the esteem and confidence they all felt in her leadership and her ever ready sympathy for the relief of all distress, and her strong organising ability had been the greatest value to our cause and our soldiers. It was on this happy occasion, when they had met together to welcome and thank their soldiers, Mrs Tripp said she had been asked to present to Mrs Hislop from her friends and fellow workers in the League, the gifts before her now, they were inscribed as follows: "Presented to Mrs Hislop in recognition of her war service 1914-1918. From her friends in the Home and Empire League" - and we hope they will ever serve to remind you and your children after you of the friendships you have formed, and how we stood together, and did what we could for the cause of Freedom and Justice. The applause which followed, and the hearty way everyone sang, "For she's a Jolly Good Fellow," and cheered, proved how deservedly popular the President was, and the value of her organisation appreciated. The presentation given, consisted of a beautiful solid silver Coffee Urn and Lamp, entree dish, and sauce boat. Mrs Hislop who was much touched by the kind feelings thereon, thanked the members for their gifts which she would always value.

The first supper was served shortly afterwards, a table being placed on the stage for the officials, and about 180 seated in the body of the hall. The table decorations had been undertaken by Mrs Sercombe, Mrs Crowe, and Miss Esther Barker, and were quite beautiful, pink, mauve, and yellow again being the scheme, each lady undertaking a colour, and the arrangements for about 80 guests, with coloured table lamps and silver candelabra, the whole made a charming scene, and the excellent supper provided by Mr Bryant was thoroughly appreciated by all.

Dancing was kept up till after 2, everyone being loud in their praise of the music supplied by Mr De Lautour, and the very efficient way the duties of M.C. were undertaken by Mr Wood and Mr Mullaly.

A very successful and happy evening was brought to a conclusion by the singing of Auld Lang Syne and God Save the King.