

Ian Alford Memorial Scout Hut Opened

1,000 SEE STATE CHIEF TURN THE KEY IN MAIN DOORS

A thousand people saw the Chief Commissioner for Scouting in Queensland, Mr. A. A. Jackson, officially open the Ian Alford Memorial Hut in Longreach on Saturday afternoon.

The Hut, recently completed at a cost of about £3,000, is in memory of a well loved Scout Master of pre-war days, and who was killed in action in the last War—Ian Alford.

In the large assembly present was his brother, Mr. Dudley Alford, and a telegram regretting their absence was received from Mrs. Alford (snr.) and Ian's sister, Miss Margaret Alford.

Also included in the crowd was the founder of Scouting in Longreach, Mr. T. A. Davies, who started the first Troop here early in 1913.

A late S. M. of 1st Longreach, Mr. Garth Havig, recently transferred to Brisbane, made a special trip to Longreach to be present at this ceremony.

The opening of the afternoon's ceremony was marked by the hoisting of the Union Jack to the top of the mast, while the Longreach Town Band played the National Anthem, all Scouters, Scouts, Cubs, Guides, Brownies standing at the salute, and the public standing to attention.

The Chief Commissioner, with the Deputy State Chief and General Secretary, Mr. G. C. Collings, were met at the entrance gate by the G.S.M., Mr. H. F. McKee. The Guides and Brownies were inspected before the official party moved to the Scout parade ground, where the C.C. and D.C.C. were met by S/M Roach, who introduced them to the other Scouters and Cubmasters, prior to inspecting the boys.

Then followed the opening ceremony, and the Chairman of the 1st Longreach Group Committee, Mr. J. G. Walker, and the contractor who built the Hut, Mr. J. Feehely, came to the dias. The latter handed the key of the building to Mr. Walker, with his wishes for very many years of successful use by the Scouts and Cubs.

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Accepting the key, Mr. Walker thanked Mr. Feehely for the faithful workmanship he and his men had put into the building. He reminded those present that Mr. Feehely had said that all he wanted to make out of this job was cost, as it was a job for the Longreach Scouts, and this was highly appreciated by the Committee and the boys, said Mr. Walker.

START WITH R.S.L. Relating some of the history of

the move to get a hut, Mr. Walker said that it started from a suggestion in 1947 made by His Excellency the Governor, to the Longreach Sub-Branch of the R.S.L., that something should be done towards helping the Scouts to obtain a better hut. The Sub-Branch made a donation of £100 and that was the foundation of their fund, and the Sub-Branch had made a handsome donation each year since.

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In 1948 the Committee's total receipts were £105, in 1950 they were £250 and to-day the assets are worth £3000. This indicates the generosity of the citizens of town and district in cash, materials and labour. The boys' own efforts had raised nearly £500.

Although they had hoped* to open the Hut free of debt, they did not quite reach that, and owed about £175.

"I now hand over the Ian Alford Memorial Hut to the G.S.M. of 1st Longreach, Mr. McKee, with best wishes for many years of Scouting," said Mr. Walker.

He also made a presentation of a Bible to the Group, handing this to Mr. McKee, too.

The Group Scoutmaster expressed his delight with the very large attendance, and a welcome was also extended to the Guides and Brownies, and to the Chief Commissioner, Deputy Chief Commissioner, Field Commissioner (Mr. D. T. Weir) and District Commissioner (Rev. A. W.

Chief Commissioner. They must give the boys the opportunity to develop themselves. If left to themselves, there was always the danger they would be led into wrong channels, but in Scouting they had something balanced between the mental and the spiritual and boys could not go wrong by following the rules laid down by Lord Baden Powell.

One of the troubles in the community to-day, continued Mr. Jackson, was lack of zealousness in public service. It was not so much money that was needed, but personal interest.

The Queen was vitally interested in Scouting, and there were 3000 Scouts from all British countries at the Coronation.

The Governor-General, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, who is also Commonwealth Chief Scout, realises the great value of Scouting. "But the important link in the movement is the boy himself and it is for him that units like this are built," said Mr. Jackson.

He was very pleased to officially open the Ian Alford Memorial Hut, and he congratulated the Committee and members of the troops and leaders on the splendid work achieved. He had been proud to come to Longreach for this function.

Success of Scouting was absolute, said the Deputy Chief, Mr. Collings, and by achieving what they had, which was climaxed that day, they were doing something, not only for the boys, but for their future men.

This was a proud day for the Longreach Shire Council, said the Chairman (Cr. R. R. Edkins), to see this building completed, and he congratulated all associated with the project. To the boys he said, "You owe a debt to those who have gone before you, and the only way to repay that debt is to put those who come after you in debt to you."

In moving a vote of thanks to the Chief Commissioner for coming to their opening, the D.C., Rev. Laurie, said that a Scout Hut was as much a necessity in a community as their Church. The Church, plus the Scout Hut, plus the Home, meant they would always have good boys.

"A DREAM COME TRUE"

He had known Longreach Scouting for 25 years, said Mr. Dudley Alford, and such a Hut as they had that day had been a dream for the future, and he was pleased that their dream had now become a reality.

He expressed his mother's thanks and his own for their gesture in naming the hut in memory of his late brother. He was also pleased that they were not for

Laurie). The Band and representatives of other organisations were included in the welcome to the function which marked their most memorable day and the happiest he had spent in Scouting in his four years in Longreach, said Mr. McKee.

He was particularly gratified that a member of Ian Alford's family was present, in Mr. Dudley Alford, representing his mother and sister.

Another who was most welcome, and who deserved special mention, continued Mr. McKee, was Mr. Tom Davies, founder of Longreach Scouting.

To-day they had 100 boys in the Group, and very excellent Scouters, but not nearly enough of the latter to work satisfactorily, and he appealed for men to come forward to act as Scouters. They had a long waiting list of boys wanting to join the Scouts and Cubs, but could not take any more for the reason stated.

Assurance was given to the Group Committee that they would always cherish this Hut. If the Guides or Brownies wanted to use it at any time, they were welcome.

DOORS OPEN

He thanked Mr. Walker for the key, which he handed to the Chief Commissioner to open the doors, which was then done.

There is no need to say they needed Scouting to-day, said the Chief Commissioner. They must give the boys the opportunity to

of his late brother. He was pleased that they were not forgetting those other old Scouts who lost their lives in action.

The Scouts and Cubs must not think of the Hut only as a memorial, but as a symbol of Scouting.

Appreciation for what had been done for Longreach Scouting was also expressed by the Field Commissioner, Mr. D. T. Weir.

MEMORIAL TREE AVENUE

Concluding the official ceremony was a tree planting, when 12 blueleaf pines were planted six on each side of the drive to the Hut. Several were planted as memorials to old Longreach Scouts killed in action, and others by selected persons present. Mr. Davies planted one to commemorate his founding of Longreach Scouting.

Afternoon tea provided by the ladies was taken and this was followed by Scouting and Cubbing displays, which attracted keen interest of the large crowd.