

**NBHS 1933 Laying of Foundation Stone**



*The stone was laid by Hon. D H Drummond, on 16 September 1933.*

*Dignitaries, left to right: Ald. O J Ellis (Mayor of Waratah), Hon. D H Drummond (Minister for Education), Ald. E Richardson (Pres. NBHS P&C Association), Ald. R Christie (Deputy Mayor of Newcastle), Hon. D Watkins MHR, Chas. H Christmas Esq. BA (Headmaster, Newcastle Boys' High School), R Harvey Esq. BA, W Lamb Esq. (Baker & Lamb, Contractors)*

## HIGH SCHOOL

### Minister Sets Foundation Stone

## WARATAH CEREMONY

### Newcastle as Education Centre

After years of agitation, the foundation stone of the Newcastle Boys' High School was set by the Minister for Education (Mr. D. H. Drummond), at Waratah on Saturday. The ceremony which was organised by the Boys' High School Parents and Citizens' Association, was attended by many representative citizens and aldermen from surrounding municipalities. A silver trowel used by the Minister to set the stone was loaned by the Mayoress of Newcastle (Mrs. R. G. Kilgour).

"The erection of the new Boys' High School building at Newcastle marks the end of a long period of agitation and hope deferred," said Mr. Drummond. "For many years the question of having the building provided has claimed the close attention of local public bodies and individuals interested in Newcastle's educational facilities, and it has been a matter of no small concern to myself. When my Government was previously in office, the secondary education needs of Newcastle were brought strongly under my notice. The new building for the Girls' High School gave some relief to the accommodation position, but there was no slackening in the demand for a new building for the boys. In 1928 plans and specifications were prepared for the erection of a building for the boys on a site acquired at Hamilton. Later, it was decided that the Waratah site would be more suitable for the general requirements of the district, and I gave instructions for the plans to be revised so that they would be adaptable to the Waratah site. Shortage of funds and a change in the Government caused further delay in proceeding with the erection of the building, but in April last I was glad to be in a position to invite tenders for the work, which is now well under way. Before this time next year Newcastle district will have one of the finest high schools for boys in the State."

## INTERESTING HISTORY.

High schools were first established in New South Wales in 1883, but it was not until 1906 that the Newcastle High School for boys and girls came into operation, said Mr. Drummond. The school was opened in June, with Mr. Charles Smith as Principal, and for the remainder of the year there were 28 boys and 34 girls enrolled. The premises used by the high school were part of the old Newcastle Public School, which had been in operation since 1859. The establishment of the high school proved a boon to Newcastle children, who previously had been obliged to travel to Maitland if they wished to take secondary education. Accommodation conditions in the early years were far from satisfactory, but some relief was offered in 1911, when the primary school was closed and the building became occupied solely by high school pupils. The next change came at the beginning of 1930, when the girls were transferred to their new building. For the past term there was an average weekly enrolment of 625 at the Newcastle Boys' High School and under Mr. Charles Christmas, the

Principal, there were 28 assisting teachers. Other headmasters who had been in charge of the school were Messrs. W. Williams, G. Saxby, and Robert Harvey.

Giving an outline of the facilities provided in Newcastle for educational purposes, the Minister said that the attendances at the high schools were - Boys, 608; girls, 514; intermediate high schools, Cook's Hill, 395; Hamilton, 314; central schools, Broadmeadow, 924; Newcastle Domestic Science, 742. In the super-primary schools at Plattsburg, Wickham, and Hamilton, 266 were enrolled, while in the primary and infants' schools the attendances ranged from 269 to 1360. In addition, 78 high school students attended the secondary education classes at Newcastle Technical College.

#### WHEN BOYS LEAVE SCHOOL.

Of the boys who had left the schools and gained employment a table of figures submitted by the Minister showed that last year the number was greater than in 1931. The occupations into which the boys had been absorbed ranged from the Public Service to unskilled employment. Last year 2390 were absorbed in agricultural and pastoral, and 1019 in trades. Mine employees numbered 49, public servants 121, clerks and shop assistants 1006, and unskilled employment 3204. The figures referred to boys who had left primary and super-primary schools. Of the boys who left and whose occupations were unknown (which, in most cases would mean unemployment), there were 2499 in 1932, as compared with 2347 in 1931. The number of pupils who entered unskilled employment was apparently large, but positions in this sphere were always more plentiful, and offered, in most cases, more attractive commencing wages so that at the present time boys did not hesitate to accept any employment that might be offering.

Referring to education generally, the Minister said that boys and girls were as different as men and women, but apparently educationalists accepted them in much the same manner as water running into a trough. Practically every child was differently moulded. They were of a different temperament, and one of the difficulties of the educationalist was to find the temperament or natural bent of the child. In this, parents could help by studying the aptitude of their children in various ways. They should know that a boy who wished to screw two boards together would have very little time for a study of Latin. While it was satisfactory to see so many boys going into work of any description, it would have been more pleasing to have learned that they had entered skilled trades. However, the time would come when those who had the skills would come back to their natural work. Then it would be that their skill would be of some benefit. It was for the more fortunate boys and girls to assist their fellowmen not to scorn them. That was one of the traditions on which the education system was built. In Newcastle they had a great heritage, and ahead of them a great ploughed field for education. Newcastle should be the great manufacturing place of Australia because of its enormous coal deposits. The local Technical College was merely a shadow of itself. In reality it should be the great engineering university of Australia. Education in the district had lagged too long. But the people had awakened it. He hoped they would keep it awake to make the district one of the great education centres of the State.

#### GYMNASIUM WANTED.

The President of the Newcastle Boys' High School Parents and Citizens' Association (Ald. E. Richardson), who acted as Chairman, welcomed Mr. Drummond, and briefly outlined the agitation for the school. He told how the Waratah aldermen had made available land in their

park for the erection of the building, and mentioned, incidentally, that had suitable land been found the school would have been erected long ago. Much of the work which led to the erection of the building had been carried on by the Parents and Citizens' Association, which had the assistance of the Old Novocastrians' Association, and, later, of the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations. Ald. Richardson informed the Minister that while the building appeared to be satisfactory in every way, no provision had been made for a gymnasium. This, he said, could have been erected with the money saved on the contract, which was originally set down at £30,000. He asked that consideration be given to that aspect. He was pleased that the Government had not imposed high school fees.

A fountain pen and pencil were handed to Mr. Drummond, as a memento of the occasion.

The Mayor of Waratah (Dr. O. J. Ellis), Mr. D. Watkins, M.H.R., the Deputy Mayor of Newcastle (Ald. R. Christie), and the President of the Parents and Citizens' Federation (Mr. J. Wiggins) also spoke. A vote of thanks to the Minister, proposed by the former Headmaster of the Boys' High School (Mr. R. H. Harvey), and seconded by the present Headmaster (Cr. C. H. Christmas), and supported by Mr. B. Helmore (Old Novocastrians' Association), was carried by acclamation.

#### THE SCHOOL DESCRIBED.

The site of the school is at the corner of Turton-road and Young-street, Waratah, and adjoins the present public school and Waratah Park. The main classroom block is over 300 feet in length, and is two storeys in height. The classrooms are ranged on the east side of the main access corridor. From the centre of the main block is a central wing projecting towards the front and containing on the ground floor the main entrance hall, Headmaster's room, visitors' room, and two classrooms on the first floor, main staff room, and a large library. Adequate provision has been made throughout this main block for hat and cloak rooms, stores, staff rooms, three concrete staircases, &c. A room for the Deputy Headmaster has been provided for. The assembly hall is at the rear of the main block. It is centrally placed, and connected to the main block by a wide arcaded, covered way.

The assembly hall is 75ft. by 35ft., portion of the area being taken up by a 10ft. wide stage, with dressing-room on either side. At the rear of the assembly hall is the tuckshop, shelter, lavatory, and toilet accommodation. Generous provision has been made at convenient situations in the grounds for paved assembly areas, drinking fountains, and fixed seating. The construction of the building is in brick, cavity walling on reinforced concrete footings, and roofs covered with French-patterned tiles. The floors and stairs throughout are of fire proof construction, and the installation of electric light, and power, gas, water, and sewerage services has been arranged.

Messrs. Baker and Lamb, who successfully carried out the contract for the Girls' High School, are the building contractors, under the supervision of the Government Architect.