



The new Auroa war memorial hall that is to be officially opened by the Minister of Lands and member of Parliament for Egmont, Mr. E. B. Corbett, tonight.

Mr. Corbett Will Open Memorial Hall Tonight

Tonight at 8 o'clock the Auroa Highland Pipe Band will pipe the Minister of Lands, Mr. E. B. Corbett, and the official party through the main doorway of Auroa's new war memorial hall for the most important event in Auroa's history during the past 50 years.

When he officially declares the new hall open Mr. Corbett, who, as the member of Parliament for Egmont, has been responsible for a great deal of the success of the district's community centre project, will be setting the seal on a three-year effort which no doubt will be destined to play the most important part in the district's community life during the next 50 years.

Auroa's new hall is more than just a country district's meeting house. It is costing the people of the district more than £10,000, but a community's money could not be better spent.

A very large auditorium 35ft wide by 47ft long is the feature of the whole building. With permanent seating along both sides and along the back, the hall, besides being the ideal size for a dance hall, will be used for the showing of weekly films and also for indoor bowls. A total of 250 collapsible chairs has been bought, as well as stools, tables and trestles, all of which will be stored under the stage when not in use.

The stage is big enough for almost any type of entertainment, and after the official part of the proceedings tonight, a concert party will be the first to use it. A fine new curtain provides the finishing touch.

Most modern facilities are provided in the kitchen, which connects with the 50 feet long, 21 feet wide, supper room along the south end of the building. The supper room will seat 130 in one sitting and is big enough for two indoor bowling rinks.

Just inside the main entrance is the ticket box, with the men's and women's cloakrooms to the rear of the ticket box.

On the north-western end of the building is one of the most important rooms. The Auroa branch of the Plunket Society has been in operation for a large number of years, but not until the new memorial hall has been built have the mothers and children of the district had such fine headquarters. The fittings for the room have been provided by the society, which will pay a yearly rent to the Auroa War Memorial Hall Board. The board will help with outside maintenance.

At the north end of the building is a library room which can also be used as a committee room, and the projection room is a separate department built into the north wall. Films will be shown once a week.

Headed by its chairman, Mr. S. W. Bailey, and the secretary, Mr. T. H. Robins, the Auroa War Memorial Hall Board has been extremely busy during the past three years, but has not forgotten to pay tribute to Mr. Corbett, for the part he played in the early negotiations for Government approval for the project.

The board, which has full control over the property, will be elected every seven years. The original price of the tender, £7000, has been paid, but an additional amount of more than £2000 for extra fittings and furnishings is the only outstanding amount, and the board's first job will be to pay this amount off.

The property, of one rood 16 perches, was surveyed in November, 1953, a public meeting was held on March 10, 1954, and the board was elected to office on March 19, 1954. The building was actually started on March 8, 1955, and occupies 4000 square feet.

AUROA WAS SOLD BY AUCTION

Auroa began in the same way as many country districts in New Zealand. Covered by heavy bush—some old residents say it was the most heavily timbered land in New Zealand—Auroa, originally named Ratanui because of the enormous quantity of gigantic rata trees there, was sold by public auction at Manaia in 1884.

The fertility of the soil has largely contributed towards the success of Auroa as a farming community. The present green grasslands are a tribute not only to the farmers of today but to the work and foresight of the pioneers.

After the erection of the new school building in 1891, the population of Auroa warranted a public hall where the community could get together and hold functions. The old hall was erected in 1900 and officially opened with a carnival and sale of work.

It is around the opening that an amusing tale is remembered. The articles at the sale had to be protected during the hours of darkness, so it was arranged that a guard sleep in the hall. During the auction sale the following day the guard was horrified to see his pyjamas being held up for sale, and only just managed to rescue them before the auctioneer knocked them down to the highest bidder.

CLOSE FINISH IN WOMEN'S BOWLS FINAL

Playing consistently good bowls, Mrs. G. Gillespie and Mrs. F. Frewin (New Plymouth) defeated Mrs. E. Rowe and Mrs. D. Telfar (Waitara) 21-20 to win the final of the Taranaki Women's Bowling Centre's open pairs championship at the Riverside green, New Plymouth, yesterday.

It was a tense finish with Mrs. Rowe making a gallant bid for the six on the last end and that would have enabled her to have tied and which would have caused a replay. Mrs. Gillespie led all the way and at the 10th end, had run to a 14-5 lead. From then onwards Mrs. Rowe gradually reduced the leeway until at the 20th head the score stood at 21-15 in Mrs. Gillespie's favour. However, on the last end Mrs. Rowe collected a five and it was a measure for the sixth shot.

Third place went to Mrs. E. Mackie and Mrs. A. Campbell (Tarata), who defeated Mrs. J. Williams and Mrs. L. Rudings (Waiwaka) 16-14.

The greens were in splendid order, and a large crowd, including many men, watched the day's play.

Results were:—
Semi-finals: Rowe and Telfar 29 beat Mackie and Campbell 11; Gillespie and Frewin 19 beat Williams and Rudings 14. Final: Gillespie and Frewin 21 beat Rowe and Telfar 20.