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| **Early Settlement by George Clout No. 12** *17 April 1924 The Tumut and Adelong Times* |
| *"The measure of a people is the men**That, rise from out themselves to load with pen,**Or tongue or sward."*The first election under responsible government took place in 1856. There was no Tumut election at that period; Tumut was part and parcel of the Murrumbidgee electorate, and was represented in the first Parliament by John Hay, of Walaregang, afterwards Sir John Hay. He was our representative in the first and second parliaments. In 1858 a Reform Bill was introduced and carried through parliament, which gave the colony fourteen additional members, making the total number sixty-eight. This, of course, meant fourteen more electorates. Tumut then became the centre of an electorate under its own name and in 1859 the first member for the Tumut electorate was returned. This was George Dunmore Lang, a brother of the famous Statesman. Dr. Lang. He did not long hold the  position, as he resigned the following year, and was succeeded by Charles Cowper, jnr. Cowper was elected on November 1st, 1860 and a dissolution of Parliament took place on the 10th of the same month. He was again elected and held the position until the 24th 0f October 1863 when he again resigned. On the16 November following Mr, James Martin was elected, and he held the position until Nov. 10th, 1864, when there was a dissolution of Parliament and the seat was again vacant. Sir James Martin was again a candidate, but his opponents brought Cowper out against him again, and Cowper defeated him, but he never took his seat, and for that reason, at the end of the session the seat was declared vacant. On the 20th August 1866 Mr. E. G. Brown was elected, and was the representative of Tumut through two Parliaments, until Dec. 1872, to be followed by James Hoskins, T. O'Mara, Travers Jones, and R. T. Donaldson in succession. Like the Tumut, Gundagai first formed part of the Murrumbidgee electorate. An electorate, the boundaries of which were repeatedly altered, Mr. William Forster was returned as the first member for Gundagai, on 30th Nov., 1880, succeeded by Bruce Smith in 1882. These two gentlemen sat through the 11th and J. H. Want the 12th and 13th, Mr. J. F. Barnes was its representative through the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, I8th and 19th Parliament. Gundagai then ceased to exist as a separate electorate as it was merged into Cootamundra. State aid was a prominent feature of the politics of a far back time, and this applied in some little measure to schools as well as to the churches. The catechism and religious teaching of the respective churches was most conscientiously taught. This fact stimulated the churches to individual effort. An intense rivalry sprang up, the Rev. Dr. Lang, leading in the Presbyterian Church the Wesleyan body under the agency of their conference extending the work of denomination schools, the Catholics evincing an historic zeal worthy of their past record. And the Church of England with prestige and patronage, having the advantage in multiplied its schools adinfinitum. Some of good quality, some of very primary character. With the rise and progress of the sentiment of responsible government came an earnest thirst for knowledge. An autocratic government in which one man dictates, and to army of trained soldiers enforces his commands, requires very little intelligence on the part of the people ruled; in fact, the less they know the better. The nearer the approach to this kind of government, the less need for schools. All history shows this to be a fact. On the other hand the closer we come to an absolute democracy the greater the necessity for schools; and the necessity creates the thirst and the thirst, according to the great law of want, creates the supply. A few remarks with regard to our pioneers, and my task is ended. The rapid transition that has taken place in the country up to the present time is nothing short of marvellous. A hundred years is but a short time in the history of a nation. It is also a very short period for the conversion of a wilderness into a prosperous, pastoral and agricultural country. In the early days of settlement the trouble with the aborigines, and the ruthless way in which they in some instances were treated by white men has met with strong disapproval, but very often the black was the aggressor. They could never understand what right the white man had to take his land and his game, which of course was his living. On the other hand the earl settler was at the mercy of the black when he made a periodical raid on his home and his cattle. In any case that the black must make way for the white was a foregone conclusion. Their decrease has been rapid. In Tasmania they have disappeared entirely. In Victoria, there remain but few. In Queensland they are yet plentiful, but even there, there is evidence of rapid decay, and the work of extermination still goes on, not as a concerted plan, but none the less steadily and surely.  At our second, centennial they will be a thing of the past. It’s to the early pioneers, the men of the past, that Australia owes her debit as a nation. They came not to de feat the purpose of life as embodied in the aboriginal, but to build civilisation that would reflect honor on both builder and country. It was not an easy task to lay the foundation of a nation. It needed masterminds and willing workers. Both were found. This bright, sunny land, whose hills and dales were decked with floral tints of beauty invited men from other lands to come and rest beneath the vine and the fig tree they could call their own. Obedient to that call, they came, hopeful in   the flush of their noon day, and they dug, and toiled and won. As regards the many old pioneers to whom I have too briefly referred, what marvels their story would unfold could it be written in full. Our early history is a story not only of toil and hardship, but needless oppression and brutality on the helpless. It dare not be written in the light of day. The clanking chains of the felon establishments darkened the gloom of the days of the pioneer. But that darkness made brighter the sunshine that was to follow. A sunshine that was heralded in by a race of giants that arose to do battle in the cause of humanity, by compelling a complete cessation of the transportation of criminals hitherward, by giving us a free and unfettered press, the privilege of choosing for ourselves who were to rule over us, a noble system of education, and the placing of the land, within the reach of the people.   They sacrificed not only time, but in some cases life itself, and not in vain, for they reached the summit, and as a result, we of today stand in the floodtide of prosperity.    Their action calls upon us to continue the work they so nobly commenced, and may it be our highest ambition to leave behind us for those who come after, a record as progressive and as useful as that of the old pioneers. In conclusion I may be permitted it quote the beautiful words of Lady Jersey from her little poem to the Australian people, when Federation was in the air, entitled ''One People, One Destiny.''*''Let them, when heart has been knitted to heart,* *The, future in calmness abide.**Let them, when hand has with hand taken part**Fear God, and fear nothing beside**Our King has the keys of our Empire to keep**Where sets and where rises the sun.**Our brothers, his wardon, are lords of the deep**Our People, their Destiny one.”* |