Objection 289

Cr Keith Cook

2 pages

AEC.

Dear Sir,

I wish to make a submission to the renaming of the federal division of McMillan in Victoria. I would like to suggest an alternative name of 'Sutcliffe', he was a pioneer to the area and was involved making positive change for more than 30 years throughout this federal division.

I am a member of the Warragul and District Historical Society, The Drouin History Group and a historian for the Rokeby and Crossover Gold fields. I also chair the Baw Baw Shire place names advisory committee.

John Sutcliffe arrived in Victoria from Keighley England in 1863 and there is evidence to show he arrived in West Gippsland a year later. He lodged a gold claim at the Crossover diggings (north of Warragul) circa 1865. Then after getting married and starting his family, in opened an accommodation premises on the old Gippsland road circa. 1868 (Buln Buln East). He supplied miners, drovers and traveller's provision's as well as mails and later was granted a liquor licence.

A new railway line was being built through to Gippsland circa. 1877 and the new town of Drouin was surveyed. John Sutcliffe purchased land opposite the new railway station and built the Drouin Family Hotel circa 1878. John soon became a Councillor of the newly formed Buln Buln Shire, completing several terms resulting in 13 years of service, from 1880 to 1893 and shire president 1888.

In these early years of the area's development John was involved in the establishment of the Drouin Church of England and was also on the district state school board. There was a need for transport so from circa. 1882 he established coach runs to the north of Drouin as far as Neerim, and south as far as Poowong, John won mail contracts in circa. 1884 to service small towns along the way.

When the Great Southern Railway was being built in 1890 he saw the opportunity to assist the town folk in Korumburra and in circa. 1993 built a two-story brick building which housed the Australasian bank, chemist and a bakery. Then in 1894 he completed a new modern 22 bedroom hotel in Korumburra.

He supported the coal miners of Korumburra and Coal Creek for better conditions and lobbied for a bigger and better post office for Korumburra.

He was just appointed to the water board in 1895 when he suffered a fatal heart attack and died at the age of 53 years.

The papers of the day reported "The deceased was a man of sterling qualities, always ready to put out a helping hand to help a fellow creature in distress, a good husband and a kind and indulgent father. He leaves a widow and grown up family".

After his funeral in Korumburra, it was reported several hundred people lined the streets to pay their respect as the hurse carriage made it way to the railway station. Hundreds more followed the hearse from St. Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne, to his resting place in Kew cemetery.

As far as I am aware there is no street, park or anything else in Baw Baw or South Gippsland Shire for the memory of this amazing pioneer who contributed so much to the development and community of the district. I recognise other names have been suggested but believe there is no one person's name more fitting to this division than John Sutcliffe.

Kind Regards

Keith Cook

Cr Keith Cook
Councillor (West Ward)

www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au

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