

"Their Noble Death for Evermore."

THE MIDDAY PAUSE,

Final Observance, Cape Town, Saturday, Dec. 14th, 1918.



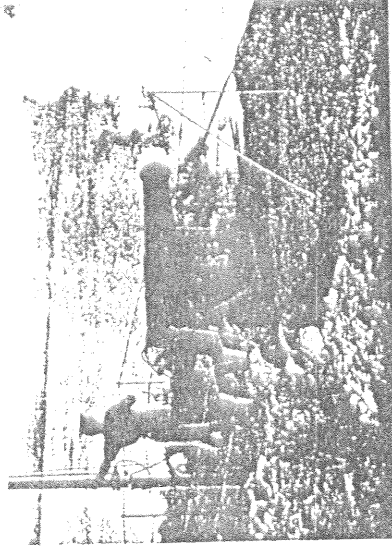
HISTORICAL NOTE.

THE Midday Pause was first observed in Cape Town on Tuesday, May 14th, 1918. It was instituted in response to an appeal issued by Mr. Harry Hands, then Mayor of Cape Town, "in order to direct the minds of the people to the tremendous issues which are being fought out on the Western Front, and to afford a minute or two for silent prayer for the forces of the Allies there engaged." In the six months that have passed there have been hours of terrible anxiety, as well as hours of great rejoicing. Daily the Pause has been observed with a faithfulness and a solemnity which cannot be too highly commended. It is believed that the highest expectations which were formed at the time of its institution have been realised. Now that the guns have ceased their deadly work, and the Allied arms have achieved complete and decisive victory, it is felt that the appropriate moment has arrived to discontinue the observance of the Pause, and the Last Post sounds today to the memory of the gallant dead who have given their lives that we may live in freedom and security. It has been decided that in memory of the Fallen the Pause will be observed once annually hereafter upon a day to be selected. The time has now come to

SOUND THE REVEILLE.

The Proceeds of the Sale of this Programme will be applied to the "Our Day" Red Cross Fund.

PAUSE FOR REMEMBRANCE



Each day towards the end of the war the noonday gun that fired on Signal Hill was the sign for Cape Town citizens to be silent and bow their heads in prayer for two minutes. The noon pause was initiated on 14 May 1918 by the Mayor, Councillor H. Hands, who explained: 'In some places in the Union it has been the practice during the last few weeks to call a halt at midday in order to direct the minds of the people to the tremendous issues which are being fought out on the Western Front, and to afford a minute or two for silent prayer for the forces of the Allies engaged there.'

'This seems to be an excellent example to copy, and I now appeal to all citizens to observe the same practice in Cape Town as from to-morrow (Tuesday). Upon the sound of the midday gun, all tramway cars will become stationary for three minutes and other traffic should halt wherever it may be for the same period.'

The Mayor asked pedestrians to remain standing wherever they might be when the gun sounded, and everyone, however engaged, to desist from their occupation and observe silence for the short spell. Employers could greatly assist by advising their staff to this effect, he added.

The *Cape Argus* reported the following day: 'This morning the citizens of Cape Town

and residents in the suburbs responded to the Mayor's appeal, to observe a few moments' silence at midday in sympathy with the gallant fellows fighting at the front, and as a token of respect to those who have fallen, or been wounded. As the midday gun sounded traffic was brought to a standstill. A soldier on Cartwright's balcony sounded *The Last Post*. Pedestrians came to a halt and the majority of males removed their hats.'

However, one person wrote to the *Cape Argus* to complain of 'a lamentable lack of adherence to the three minute halt requested'. Taxi-cab drivers, said the writer, were flagrant offenders in Adderley Street traffic, and by two minutes past twelve, 'the length of Adderley Street was in a state of ordinary animation again'.

On the second day the pause was more effective, and the *Cape Argus* stated that 'never has there been a more impressive three minutes in the heart of the Mother City of South Africa'. The Mayor subsequently decided that the pause would 'retain its hold on the people if it is altered to two minutes instead of three'.

The noonday pause continued until 17 January 1919, and was revived during the Second World War. No longer a pause, the boom of the gun is nowadays a signal for thousands of Capetonians to check their watches.

later in Harry Hands, RBE