

COMMONWEALTH NOTES

NEW SOUTH WALES.

His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney blessed and laid the foundation stone of the first portion of the new church at Lithgow on Sunday afternoon, June 1, in the presence of a large and representative gathering. His Grace was received by a guard of honor, composed of members of the Hibernian Society, Irish National Foresters, St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Children of Mary, who formed a procession from the presbytery to the site of the new church. After the ceremony a public meeting was held, at which his Grace presided. His Grace the Archbishop congratulated the parishioners on the work they had just begun, and said it was significant that the foundation stone of their new church was laid on a glorious day—within the Octave of the Ascension of Christ into heaven. The undertaking was a large one, but, animated by the spirit of piety and love for Holy Church, he had no misgivings for the future. Little by little the burden that they were carrying would disappear; but their fine church would remain. God would have them to do all things aright, and in what way could they find a better example than in the building of a home for Our Lord on earth? Touching on Ireland, in concluding his address, the Archbishop remarked that he felt his Irish spirit rising when speaking of Ireland's wrongs, and stated that the world now recognised that the withholding of Irish nationality had continued too long—that Ireland should have a chance to develop and govern herself with some measure of independence, that her Parliament, which had been wrongfully taken from her, should be restored, and that the record of misgovernment by England should be for ever broken. The world now said, in effect, let Ireland be for the Irish as England is for the English and Australia for the Australian. As a result of tyranny and years of oppression there were only four millions of people in Ireland, whereas they could have had twelve. Ireland could forgive, even though at the present time there were English machine-guns, soldiers, and tanks in the streets of her cities. She had now overcome her one great weakness—divisions. The sons of Ireland had shed their blood for England, and, if needs be, they were prepared to give their lives that Ireland should now be free. The results if Ireland were denied that to which all nations were justly entitled—to govern their own destinies—would be the fault of the ruling classes of England. Let them hope that the dawn of a new Ireland was at hand.

VICTORIA.

Sister M. Philomena, a kinswoman of his Grace Archbishop Mannix, of Melbourne, and a sister of Sister Mary Kevin, of the Good Shepherd Nuns, Perth, has died from influenza at the Loreto Convent, Fermoy, Ireland.

It will be remembered that in the early stages of the war certain sectaries and their news sheets repeatedly asserted that Catholics were disloyal to the Empire for the reason—as they alleged—that they had not volunteered for service at the Front according to their due quota of the population (says the *Tribune*). When this lie had been nailed down by the publication of the official figures in regard to the enlistments, these people should have realised that, in the face of the military statistics, their statement had been effectively disproved. One would have thought that after such an experience they would have had the good sense not to repeat a statement that, when first put forward, had been blown into thin air. Experience has shown that however thorough the refutation may be, these people never realise their defeat. Consequently, at the close of the last Conscription Referendum, we found them asserting that though Catholics did send their quota to the Front in the early period of the war, they had voted solidly against conscription, and that in the later stages of the struggle they had signally failed in their proportion of man-power. We were

further assured that this fact would be amply demonstrated when Australia's soldiers returned at the conclusion of the war. Well, hostilities are at an end, and the soldiers are returning, and what do we find? That the latter assertion of these sectarian bigots has been as effectively blown out as the former one was. Through the courtesy of the Rev. Mr. Thompson, of the Presbyterian Church, who visits all incoming transports and compiles a record of the names, residences, and religion of the returning men, the Catholic Federation is supplied with copies of such lists. By this means the officials of the Federation are able to communicate with the parish priest and the secretary of the A.C.F. branch councils in which the men reside, so that assistance and advice may be given them in again entering civilian life. We have examined these lists, and find that from May 1, 1918, to April 30, 1919, the arrivals totalled 15,801, of which 2972 were Catholics, equal to 18.8 of the whole. Of course, many more soldiers have yet to return, but these figures are a fair indication of what the final result will be when the last Australian soldier lands on our shores. We have never desired to make any discrimination in regard to the religious beliefs of the brave men who volunteered to do their duty. They are all Australians—either by birth or adoption—and are all equally entitled to the respect of their fellow-men, and if we have seemed to discriminate in regard to Catholics, it has been done to defend them against the foul aspersions of a handful of bigots in the community.

QUEENSLAND.

His Grace Archbishop Duhig, in the course of his informative address regarding the interesting history of the good Sisters who are blessing Queensland with their presence and missionary work, mentioned a coincidence in connection with "Stuartholme" which made the purchase of that property as the home of the Sacred Heart Nuns most appropriate. It appears that Madame Stuart, the late Superior-General of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, was a step-sister of Mr. Richard Stuart, the original owner of the property. She was the only member of the family who was a Catholic, and had only been on a visit to the houses of the Order in Australia just prior to the war. On her return to Europe, she found her Sisters in a dreadful plight through the invasion of Belgium and portions of France. She went through much suffering during the earlier stages of the war, and finally died at the headquarters of the Order in England. Mother Stuart knew her Sisters were to come to Queensland. She had been in Brisbane herself during her Australian visit, and had she lived she would have been delighted to know that "Stuartholme" was to be the headquarters of her Order in Queensland.

THE "DEMOCRAT."

We welcome the publication of a new Labor periodical in Dunedin. Sane Labor, sane democracy, truth and justice are its aims. May it prove a champion in such causes! While commending the first number, we must say that we cannot see eye to eye with the writer on the taxation of land—our quarrel is rather with his arguments (in which there is a Marxian note) than with his thesis.

Visiting Rome at present is Mr. Walter George Smith, a leading Catholic of the United States, who is on his way to the East on a mission on behalf of his Catholic fellow-countrymen, who have subscribed generously to support their co-religionists in Palestine and other parts of the East. The object of his mission is to see that Catholics are fairly treated in the distribution of the money and supplies already sent there, and it is a direct reply to a complaint that came months ago from Jerusalem against the partiality shown in the case of the Latins. When Protestant, Jew, and Gentile were satisfied, the Catholics got what remained! was the subject of the complaint.