

COMMONWEALTH NOTES

VICTORIA.

The attempts made by a small section of sectarians, headed by the *Argus*, to have this year's St. Patrick's Day procession prohibited, had the important and memorable result that a procession which was the largest in the history of Melbourne was witnessed by the greatest crowd that has ever assembled in Bourke Street (says the *Tribune* of March 25). The 1920 St. Patrick's Day procession was in every respect the most notable that has ever been held in connection with the annual celebrations in honor of Ireland's national saint, and probably the largest that has ever taken place in Australia. It is estimated that over 20,000 people marched in Saturday's procession, including 14 winners of the supreme military decoration for valor—the Victoria Cross; over 6000 soldiers of the A.I.F.; 2000 Christian Brothers' boys, and the greatest muster of Catholic friendly societies and Irish national organisations that has ever been witnessed in the streets of Melbourne. This happy and wonderful result is in the first place due to the great and inspiring leadership of his Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne (the Most Rev. Dr. Mannix), whose devotion to Catholic and Australian citizenship has won for him a unique place in the public life of the Commonwealth; and in the second place to those sectarian-ridden people who tried to stampede the fair-minded non-Catholics into supporting them in their effort to prevent the procession from being held. Their failure is as miserable as the triumph of Dr. Mannix and those associated with him is memorable. On Saturday a vast crowd, containing many tens of thousands of people of all religious beliefs, were thrilled beyond measure at the size and magnificence of the pageant which paraded along Bourke Street to the Exhibition, to the accompaniment of one great continuous volume of cheering. A more decisive tribute to the greatness of his Grace could not possibly be imagined. The scene at the top end of Bourke Street, where his Grace's car was drawn up, to enable him to witness the procession which he had headed up to that point, and to receive the homage of his great army, was without precedent. As each section passed this spot with "eyes right," the salutations of those that comprised it were acknowledged by his Grace Dr. Mannix with that grace and rare dignity which is all his own. The Victoria Cross-winners, who formed his Grace's bodyguard, were received with an admiration and an enthusiasm only second to that with which Dr. Mannix was greeted. They were rapturously cheered at every stage of the procession by many thousands of people, whose admiration for the great qualities of which they had given such inspiring evidence at a time and place when life and death were in the balance was without bounds. Their presence there showed that they possessed the same chivalry in civil life that they had displayed on the field of battle. They were in the procession to mark their disapproval of the slanderers of his Grace and of the Catholic body, and point is given to this when it is mentioned that four of their number were non-Catholics. These four brave and generous-minded men have in a special sense earned the gratitude and the deep admiration of the Catholic people of Victoria. When the head of the procession reached Parliament House at about 2.15, Dr. Mannix alighted from his carriage, and witnessed the march of the soldiers' sections who passed his Grace at the salute. His Grace's bearing indicated his proud emotion at this wonderful culmination of his efforts for civil liberty.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

An enthusiastic public meeting was held in the Ashfield Town Hall recently for the object of assisting the Irish Race Convention Fund. Very Rev. Father P. Cullen, C.M., presided. Prior to the business of the meeting an enjoyable musical programme was given. During the evening an eloquent address on the Irish question was delivered by the Very Rev. Father M. J. O'Reilly, C.M. (Rector, St. John's College, within the University). There were some people, said Father O'Reilly, who expressed the opinion that the Irish question was no concern of Australians. On the last occasion that he spoke with a person holding such views he asked him: "Are you aware that during the course of the war we people in Australia were asked to take a most particular interest in a country to which none of us belonged?" Have you ever heard of Belgium? Is it a fact or not that 58,000 Australians died on distant battlefields? And what did they bleed for? They bled for liberty, and, as they were told, for Belgium. Did anyone say then that Australians should restrict their interest to their own country? Not at all. We were never told that when it was a question of Belgium, or

Poland, or the Jugo-Slavs, or the Finns, or any other people whose names we hardly ever heard of before. Referring to happenings in Ireland at the present time, as given with "scare" headings in the daily newspaper press, Father O'Reilly went on to say:—From the *Sydney Morning Herald* of March 5 I take out the following: "Crime Prevalent! Thirteen Capital Charges!" At the Central Criminal Court, at Darlinghurst, no fewer than 13 cases, involving capital charges, have been set down for trial—eight for alleged murder. You can imagine the contrast between 15 or 16 murders celebrating the week-end in Sydney, and the 15 policemen shot at in Ireland in two years. It appears to me that murder is Sydney's week-end. Consequently, when you hear some of these Anglo-Australians throwing up their British hands in horror at the awful iniquities of the Irish people, you can say, "Good old Sydney; we could beat that in a week-end. Recently we heard of 50 murders in England in one week, as well as innumerable burglaries. It is no harm for an Irishman to draw attention to the fact that as Irishmen we are compelled in all humility to lower our flag to England, and even to good old Sydney, in the matter of murders. In the British Empire to-day the weak were suffering. They were suffering in Ireland, in Egypt, and in India. But in spite of the persecutions to which they were subjected the Irish were never so united as they are to-day. They knew they were winning, and that they could not be beaten.

Alderman William Patrick Fitzgerald is the new Lord Mayor of Sydney. At the election recently to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the late Lord Mayor, Sir Richard Richards, the Labor Party in the City Council nominated Alderman Fitzgerald, and the Civic Reform Party offered Sir Allen Taylor as their candidate. As a result of a party decision, Alderman Fitzgerald was elected by 14 votes to 11, Alderman R. D. Meagher (Independent) supporting the Labor Party. Alderman Fitzgerald has represented Gipps Ward in the City Council for 15 years. He is a native of Sydney, was born in Essex Street in 1864, and is now in his 56th year. The members of his family are the Lady Mayoress, three sons, and one daughter. Alderman Fitzgerald was educated at the Marist Brothers' School, St. Patrick's parish. Two sons, Walter Byrne Fitzgerald and Harold Byrne Fitzgerald, are students at Christian Brothers' College, Waverley. For 25 years Alderman Fitzgerald has been a prominent worker in the Labor cause. He was originally closely associated with the Prime Minister in most of his political battles in Lang and West Sydney constituencies. At present Alderman Fitzgerald is a trustee for the Water and Sewerage Employees' Association; he has been a member of the United Laborers' Union, and president of the Darling Harbor Labor League and West Sydney Labor Council. He is regarded as a man of moderate views in the Labor movement.

QUEENSLAND.

At "Dara" a representative gathering of Irishmen assembled recently, on the invitation of his Grace Archbishop Duhig, to consider the best means of giving practical effect to the resolutions carried at the Irish-Australasian Race Convention held in Melbourne last November. His Grace presided, and after a full discussion it was decided to hold a monster public meeting in the Exhibition Hall on Wednesday, April 7, at which resolutions, in accord with the spirit and letter of those carried at the Convention, would be submitted, and the fund in aid of Ireland's right to self-determination be inaugurated. In the meantime, advantage was taken of the St. Patrick's Day celebration to advertise the event, and his Grace has kindly consented to circularise the clergy in the various parishes of the archdiocese, so that as many simultaneous public meetings may be held on the one night as possible. The Archbishop will also communicate with the administrators in Rockhampton and Northern Queensland, and advise them of the action being taken in Brisbane. Mr. P. A. McLachlan, M.L.A., was elected hon. secretary, and Hon. J. F. Donovan, M.L.C., hon. treasurer. His Grace will be permanent chairman, and with the addition of Hon. Frank McDonnell, M.L.C., the committee will be a thoroughly efficient and practical one.

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