

A PRIEST-SCIENTIST

Whether Father Archibald Shaw, Missionary of the Sacred Heart, wireless expert, and his little band of assistants will be able to do much to aid the searchers for the lost Government explorers in the wilds of Papua is not the question, though Father Shaw is sanguine (says the *Catholic Press*). The chief consideration is the splendid heroism of this Australian priest and his confreres. Though Stainforth Smith, who is Administrator of the Territory of Papua, two other white men, and 26 natives have been missing a month, the Commonwealth Government, which is charged with the conduct of affairs in that territory, has not concerned itself greatly about finding the party. Indeed, no one in Australia has moved except Father Shaw. Father Shaw was, before becoming a religious, an operator in the telegraph service, and since wireless was made a realism by Marconi he has, without interference with his duties, which include the responsibility of procurator of the Sacred Heart missions in Polynesia, been devoting himself to the science of winging words through space. And this he has done so notably that all the Commonwealth is talking about him to-day.

Though wireless has been greatly used in latter years in other countries—it was employed by some of the London papers during the Russo-Japanese war—the Commonwealth has made no serious attempt to instal it. At Randwick, at the sanatorium for the Sacred Heart missionaries who return to Sydney periodically to recuperate after years of labor in the tropics, Father Shaw has the most powerful wireless station in Australia. There is not a steel tower in this continent the like of that which aspires 250 feet skywards from the grounds of the sanatorium, in which are the operating rooms and workshops. It took three months to erect the tower, which can be seen for miles at sea. All the instruments have been made by Australians, and they are capable of recording long-distance messages, but up to the present the longest stretch covered is 2400 miles. It is hoped to span 5000 miles ere long.

When Father Shaw, who, of course, is head of the station, was appealed to a few days ago to bring wireless to the aid of the lost expedition in Papua, he expressed himself ready to start out immediately, and his operators signified their willingness to accompany him, after having had the unknown dangers they would have to face put plainly before them by Father Shaw. He told them of the fever-breeding swamps and rivers, infested by alligators, and of countless perils. He told them they would have to go out into a country wilder and more rugged than any they could imagine—a country where the hills were like the teeth of a comb; where the jungles were so thick that progress through them was not only painfully slow, but attended by many terrible privations; where the scrub insects and the leeches torture; where tropical sicknesses lay one low; where the fiercest cannibals in the world are ever on the alert to strike down the white man who invades their territory; where the bones of many intrepid men are lying bleaching beneath a fierce sun.

It was only on Tuesday morning that the Commonwealth Government accepted Father Shaw's offer, and on Wednesday he and his men left Sydney, determined to do all they could to assist the Administration with their instruments and devotion, and to remain at their stations until the Government recalled them. They have with them three wireless plants—two sets having a practicable range of 1800 miles at night, and reliable for 1000 miles under rush conditions. Father Shaw is well acquainted with the methods of travelling, and also the native languages, and he is confident that he can obtain information which a Government party would be unable to secure, and that he will be able to transmit it to the search parties. The good wishes of everyone go with the heroic Randwick priest in his heroic plunge into darkest New Guinea. Father Shaw and his nine assistants, who left on March 1, had a most enthusiastic send-off, and as the steamer moved out from the wharf at Circular Quay the people who thronged it cheered the party, who replied as the vessel swung out into the stream.

Stratford

(From our own correspondent.)

March 9.

The stained-glass windows purchased by the Rev. Father Treacy during his recent visit to Ireland have arrived, and will soon be placed in position.

On March 7 the Rev. Father Treacy entertained the children of the Stratford Convent Schools at the beautiful Ngairé gardens. About 160 children were present, and all enjoyed themselves thoroughly. Throughout the day, which was perfect for the occasion, all kinds of games were indulged in—races, swimming, and boating. A substantial lunch was provided, and a nice afternoon tea. Messrs. Gooch and Cox, who keep the Empire and Crown stables respectively, generously provided the drags to convey the children to and from the gardens. They had to make two trips each way. Everything went off without a hitch of any kind. There is no reason why this event should not be made an annual one, and supported by the parents and congregation. Every other school has its public holiday, but somehow it seems as if we are too retiring, and leave this function to the generosity of the Rev. Father Treacy.

J. M. MITCHELL

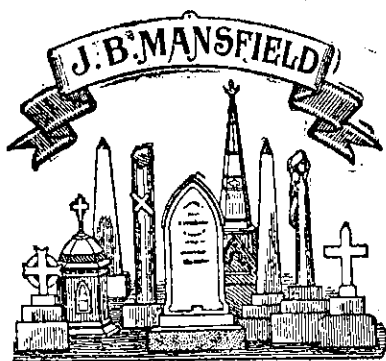
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