

Commonwealth Notes

NEW SOUTH WALES.

On Friday last (says the *Freeman's Journal* for February 12), in celebration of his 75th birthday, his Grace the Archbishop of Sydney gave a luncheon at St. Mary's Cathedral Presbytery, to which representatives of the clergy and laity were invited. His Lordship the Bishop of Bathurst proposed the health of the Archbishop, and congratulated him on the happy occasion which was being celebrated, and on his extraordinary vigor and robust health. Speaking on behalf of the bishops of New South Wales, Dr. O'Farrell assured his Grace of their ardent sympathy with the project so dear to his heart—the completion of St. Mary's Cathedral—and told him that they would presently manifest that sympathy in a practical manner. Monsignor McDermott supported the toast on behalf of the priests and Sir Thomas Hughes on behalf of the laity, the latter expressing the love and appreciation his Grace had inspired in the hearts of his people by his saintly leadership and selfless labors. The Archbishop, who made a happy reply, was in great spirits, and looked wonderfully well and strong for a man of his years.

Over 100 persons attended a meeting on a recent Sunday morning, for the purpose of making preliminary arrangements in connection with the opening of St. Michael's Cathedral, Wagga, following upon extensive additions and alterations. The contractors are now putting the finishing touches to the very beautiful interior, and everything will be in readiness for the opening ceremony on Sunday, March 22. The Very Rev. Father Ryan (Administrator of the Cathedral) stated at the meeting that 17 archbishops and bishops from all parts of the Commonwealth would be in Wagga for the opening, and about 50 or 60 priests, and many other distinguished visitors.

His Lordship Bishop O'Farrell, in the course of a scholarly address at the blessing and opening of additions to the convent school at Cowra (says the *Cowra Free Press*), referred to the disabilities Catholics labored under with regard to education, and said that all they wanted was payment for their teachers, the same as in Protestant England and Presbyterian Scotland. He said that in England at one time, it was proposed to do away with the payment of teachers and the Trades Unionists of 800,000 refused to allow it. The Government refusing to subsidise their schools, he likened to an employer collecting a certain levy for a picnic every year and refusing to allow the employees to participate in it. In Australia the Catholics were one in four of the population, and in England and Scotland, only one in ten or twelve. British Justice was talked of, but there was no such thing as Justice where their Catholic schools were concerned in Australia. When their statesmen had the same public spirit as they had in England and Scotland, then, and not till then, would they get Justice. All they wanted was payment for the work the secular teachers did! Was that not just? Catholics wanted their children taught in a religious atmosphere and did not want religion treated as a good suit—something to

put on on Sunday. Was there any other denomination had done or would do what the Catholics of Australia had for education?

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VICTORIA.

The Rev. Father Michael Watson, S.J., the well-known poet-priest and litterateur of St. Patrick's College, East Melbourne, celebrated his 80th birthday on Thursday (says the *Catholic Press* for February 10). For over half a century, Father Watson has been attached to the teaching staff of the college, and he has also been a prolific writer. In 1887 he founded the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, which has one of the largest circulations of any religious magazine in Australasia. He relinquished the editorship in 1918. Father Watson also founded the *Madonna* in 1897, which he still edits. Other devotional works from his facile pen include many volumes of poems of remarkable spirituality and religious fervor, including *Christ, the Well Beloved*, and a choice collection of lyrics and sonnets, entitled *For Christ and His Kingdom*, replete with gems of thought and poetical inspiration of the highest and holiest order. One of Father Watson's poems, set to music, has been frequently sung by the famous Irish tenor, John McCormack, who is also a native of Athlone (Ireland), the birthplace of Father Watson.

For years it has been felt in Geelong that the establishment of a Domestic Arts School was a necessity, and such an institution has now been opened by the Sisters of Mercy at St. Agnes' Ladies' College, Myers Street. The first term began on Monday, February 9. Fully qualified teachers have been secured, and it is hoped by the Sisters to provide the students with a training at least equal to the best obtaining in State schools of the same grade. The building is a handsome, airy one, with the ample ventilation that is so essential for pupils remaining indoors, as it enables them to maintain a bright demeanor and careful attention.

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QUEENSLAND.

A bronze statue of the late Hon. T. J. Ryan, a former Premier of Queensland, which is to be erected in Brisbane in a few months, has been completed by Sir Bertram Mackennal, the noted Australian sculptor, who is living in England. The statue has been handed over to the Agent-General for Queensland (Mr. J. Huxham), who has been asked to ship the statue as soon as possible. It is expected that the statue will be in Brisbane in about two months' time.

In forwarding a cheque for £25 to the honorary secretary of the fund for the statue of the late Mr. T. J. Ryan, the hon. secretary of the Queensland Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Labor League (Mr. A. G. Grier) wrote: "Your appeal for a donation towards the worthy object of providing a pedestal in free stone for the statue of the late Mr. T. J. Ryan, was before the annual meeting of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Labor League this week, and I am pleased to say that the members were very enthusiastic about it. I herewith enclose cheque for £25,

as the league's donation to the fund, and send hearty good wishes to your committee in their noble work."

His Grace Dr. Duhig has a good word for the Italian immigrant. "It is difficult to understand, except on narrow national grounds, the opposition that is being shown to Italian immigration to this country," he said at a recent gathering. "The Italians are an industrious people, and those of them who have come to this country have been an object lesson to us in that respect. They do not hang about the towns, but go straight to the land, and they cause no industrial trouble, because they work in groups, and on the share system, and become themselves holders of farms before they are many years in the country. I think it is a calamity to say that they are not law-abiding, and I was very pleased to read recently the testimony of Northern police magistrates to their good qualities as citizens. The Italian is essentially a family man, and a large family man at that. He loves his home and his children, and there is no reason why we should not hope that those children will become as good Australians as the children of any other European, or even native-born, parents. If we do not allow into the country those that will fill up the vacant spaces, instead of crowding into the cities, then we may expect trouble in the future, and trouble too, from people who may be much more alien to us than the Italian or the German. We have from the Creator no right to hold an empty country while there are people who would become estimable citizens offering to enter it, abide by its laws, and help in developing it."

DEPLETED CATHOLIC CHOIRS

The Australian Catholic parents have always been noted for the anxiety displayed by them regarding the musical equipment of their children (says the *N.Z. Herald*). In no country perhaps more than in Australia is there so unstinted generosity displayed in this matter. But it certainly is a matter of reproach and shame to find that so few of these musical enthusiasts ever find their rightful place in our local Catholic choirs in after life. Our choirs are suffering stagnation owing to lack of members, and the question of having the advantages of church choirs are becoming seriously imperilled. It is difficult to fathom the mentality of those young people who have had a musical education, and yet will not use its benefits in the due choral adoration of God. Choir work may perhaps be beneath them. Adopting this attitude they thereby display their ignorance of the right thing. If things were as they should be, and all our young Catholic ladies and men offered their service for choir work, the difficulty should be of finding suitable parts for all. As it is now, the work cannot be done in a proper manner owing to an appalling lack of members.

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