

DEATH OF MR. J. D. PRENTICE.

We record with deep sorrow, and in sympathy with a bereaved family, the death on Tuesday night of Mr. James Downs Prentice, a leading citizen and merchant of Maitland. This sudden and unexpected removal from among us of a prominent commercial and public man will be widely regretted in every circle in which Mr. Prentice's energy, industry, and zeal in the cause of good had been manifested.

Mr. Prentice was in Sydney on Wednesday and Thursday last week. On his return home on Thursday night he was seriously ill. Dr. Liddell was called in and he found that Mr. Prentice's system was completely run down. The brain had been overworked, and the heart and nervous system were badly affected. On Monday the patient was no better, but on Tuesday he appeared to have taken a decided change, and he felt so well that he actually expressed a hope that he would be able to go up to his office next day. On Tuesday evening he fainted several times, and Dr. Liddell was sent for immediately. On arrival he found the patient in a state of collapse. Dr. Alcorn was then summoned, and Dr. Liddell and he applied what remedies they thought suitable. This was about eleven o'clock. However, despite the efforts of the medical men, Mr. Prentice gradually sank, and died about quarter to twelve o'clock. He was conscious to the last, and realised that his end was near even before it came. The cause of death was heart failure, resulting from a condition that had been brought on by long mental worry. The medical gentlemen think that a fatal termination might have been expected at any moment from the state Mr. Prentice was in. It will be remembered that Mr. Prentice had a severe nervous attack at the time of the late Mr. Wolfe's funeral in 1893, of a similar nature to this fatal one, from which he then happily recovered, but the effects remained.

The late Mr. Prentice was 54 years old last September. Educated at the Rev. W. K. Colyer's Grammar School, West Maitland, at the age of 16 he engaged with the firm of Messrs. Wolfe and Gorrick, and he was connected with that firm in its various changes to ultimately Wolfe, Prentice, and Co., as accountant, manager, and partner, for the whole of his after life—a period of 38 years. He was an indomitable worker and a man with a great business capacity, very methodical and systematic in all his dealings. He was never content indeed unless hard at work; and in addition to his business duties he was ever active in the works of religion and philanthropy, and was the trusted adviser of many who sought the counsel suggested by his business experience and keen intelligence. For the greater part of his commercial life he had been intimately associated with St. Mary's parish as churchwarden and in other avenues of usefulness; he did duty for many years as lay-reader; he was representative of the parish in Synod for many years; and at the time of his death he was Treasurer of Synod, an office reluctantly accepted on account of pressure of other duties but undertaken at the earnest wish of his Lordship the Bishop of Newcastle. In Synod Mr. Prentice has always been regarded as an authority on financial matters, and want of his lucid explanation of intricate accounts will deepen the sense of loss which his fellow members will feel at the forthcoming session. He gave to his synod work as to his church work and his multifarious other duties the conscientious and painstaking attention natural to him. And his friends now think sadly, that if he had spared himself somewhat after his

natural to him. And his friends now think sadly, that if he had spared himself somewhat after his attack in 1893, and had taken a holiday, he might still be with them. But the work had to be done, and the constant strain week after week, month after month, reduced his vital forces to a fatally low ebb. And, by reason of business developments, to which it is not necessary further to allude, Mr. Prentice was called on during the last six or eight weeks to endure a vastly increased amount of anxiety and care.

The share taken by Mr. Prentice in politics was not conspicuously large, but he gave public affairs outside the town such attention as an intelligent citizen, much busied otherwise, could spare. In movements for promoting the welfare of Maitland, however, Mr. Prentice of late years has always been in the forefront, and he will be sorely missed from the counsels of townsmen.

During his long connection with St. Mary's parish as a worker, Mr. Prentice was associated with three incumbents—the late Rev. Robert Chapman—who on the occasion of the consecration of the church shortly before the demise of Bishop Tyrrell, bore eloquent testimony to Mr. Prentice's zeal and diligence in promoting the cause of God;—the Rev. W. H. H. Yarrington, and the present incumbent, the Rev. Arthur Kilworth. He leaves a widow and a grown-up family of two sons and four daughters, whose sorrow at their irreparable loss will be participated in by the whole community wherein the husband and father was so notable a figure.