

Honoring our Soldiers.

INTERESTING CEREMONY AT SAUMAREZ PONDS

A VERY interesting ceremony took place on Sunday afternoon at Saumarez Ponds, when a large gathering assembled at the Union Church to take part in the ceremony of unveiling a Roll which has been placed in the church to honour the names of the lads from that district who have gone to respond to their country's call, some of whom have paid the price with their lives. The church was tastefully decorated throughout with flowers and bunting, the Union Jack and the Australian Flag covering the Roll, which was erected at the back of the pulpit on the western wall. Every seat was filled, as well as the porch at the entrance, a number of lads being seated on the pulpit steps, while some of the congregation had to remain outside.

The Revs. H. S. Buntine and W. Stewart each took part in the service.

The Rev. H. S. Buntine preached a fine sermon from Genesis VI.—4th: "There were giants in the earth in those days." Mr. Buntine said the giants physical, intellectual and moral undoubtedly made history "in those days," nor were the Hebrews or the Israelites isolated in this respect. And so right down the centuries every nation had had its great personages—its great characters—which illuminated their respective histories. The history of the British people was replete with great men—intellectual and moral giants—drawn from all the different parts of the kingdom. England herself had provided magnificent leaders of all that was best and purest way back in the dim history of the nation right up to the present day. The political arena, the literary field, and the religious world all knew them. The same with Scotland, and the same with Ireland. And now had come Australia's turn. Our nation was not much over 100 years old, and although it had grown enormously it had never been tried by blood till now. Australia had never undertaken the serious and bloody business of war, an awful thing, but no nation was ever great that had never been baptized in blood. That had been the experience of history. But her opportunity had come, and she was engaged in the greatest struggle the world had ever seen, striving with Britain, not for gain, but for right and truth, to save the weak and helpless nations. Australia had very

helpless nations. Australia had very rightly taken her part, and was prepared with Britain, that sooner than yield and allow Belgium and the other little nations to go under and thus submit to the stain of disgrace, she would go down to oblivion still flying the flag of honor and truth. Mr. Buntine said his heart swelled with pride when he thought of what Australia had done to date. He thought of such revered names as Colonel Braund's, and right down to the humblest private who had fallen in the great fight. The Armidale district had proved keenly loyal to old England's flag, in fact it had practically been cleared out of its eligible men. Saumarez Ponds had played its part and played it well, and no quarter of the State had cause for more justifiable pride. In the centuries to come people would undoubtedly say there were indeed "giants in those days." He was personally very proud of the Saumarez Ponds people's loyalty and sense of honor, and appreciated very highly the privilege of participating in the important ceremony that day. Those mentioned on the Honor Roll had attended the Presbyterian Church. He knew there were others who attended the Church of England, but all were of the same glorious band, and he yielded to no man in honor and respect for those who had gone in the cause of freedom and justice. Their action stood far above anything we could do here. Those great, and brave and noble lads deserved everything we could possibly do for them.

Rev. Buntine wished it understood these names were only members of the church who had gone. There were many others from that district. He then asked Mr. F. S. Mitchell, of "Strathroy," brother of the ladies who had presented the Roll (Misses Kate and Flora Mitchell) to unveil the Roll, which he did in the name of God, King and country, the congregation standing.

The Rev. W. L. Stewart gave as his text—"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith," and said that though he might be too old to go and fight for his country, he was not too old to fight for God in Australia. The Empire stood true to the call of God, and if they were holding fast what about the wild influences at work amongst them, viz., the I.W.W. We professed to believe in Christ, yet we were afraid to honour him. It was not fair, because we honoured God and stood up for the right, that we should be stigmatised as "wowers."

by those who dishonoured God. We need not fight with fists, but we must be prepared to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, ready to stand up for truth and righteous-

pared to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, ready to stand up for truth and righteousness against wrong, and go forward like those good soldiers whose names were inscribed on the beautiful Roll they had just unveiled.

The congregation then rose and sang the National Anthem.

During the ceremony the organist—Miss Rita Haniel—played "He wipes a tear from every Eye."

The Roll, which is handsomely modelled in silky oak, with the inscription and names in gold, was inscribed as under :—

THE GREAT WAR,
1914—17.

Saumarez Ponds.

Men who answered the Empire's Call.

ROLL OF HONOUR.

D. Whan, —A. K.

A. Whan

A. R. Bowen

x W. E. Bowen

R. T. Dawson

D. C. Mitchell

A. K. G. Mitchell

W. J. C. Saunders

J. H. Cameron

C. E. Edmonds.

x Killed.

(The name of A. S. Cameron is to be placed on the list, having had his final leave since the roll was prepared.)

Special praise was accorded to Messrs. Bowen, Gordon, Moffatt, and others for the decoration of the church.

At the close of the proceedings the Rev. Stewart took the opportunity of saying farewell to his friends at Saumarez Ponds, as he was leaving the following week for Waratah.