

MEMORIAL TABLET UNVEILED

Cronulla Congregational Church.

A memorial tablet to perpetuate the memory of the late Rev. W. E. Goward was unveiled at a special service in the Cronulla Congregational Church last Saturday afternoon. The late Rev. Goward was for many years a missionary of the London Missionary Society in Samoa and the Gilbert Group. On his retirement he lived at Cronulla. Following on the opening hymn, the prayer of invocation was given by the Chairman of the New South Wales Congregational Union, Rev. W. T. Hooker. The tablet was unveiled by Miss Laura Forth, who was with Mr. and Mrs. Goward as a missionary nurse for many years. A dedication prayer was then given by the Rev. W. G. Sands, first minister of the church, after which the memorial address was delivered by the Rev. A. P. Campbell, B.A., President of the New South Wales Auxiliary of the London Missionary Society. The Minister, Rev. W. Touchell, read an address prepared by the Rev. W. T. Hooker. Mr. Gordon Searl was the organist, while Mr. J. C. Cruden, Chairman of the Home Mission Board, also assisted in the service. The speakers eulogised the work done by the late Rev. Goward and his wife at Cronulla, being mainly through their efforts that the church was built. The history of the building of this church has a romantic significance, being really born through a challenge made to the late Rev. Goward. After his forced retirement, owing to ill health, he settled at South Cronulla, where there was no church. He gathered a small company of Congregationalists together in his own home for the conducting of services, and when he was too ill for a service to be held there others opened their homes, so that the worship was continued without interruption. The numbers increased until it became necessary to build a church. Land was secured, a commencement made with the erection of a modest building, and arrangements completed for the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone. Then Mr. Todman, of Strathfield, saw what had been done, and learned from Mr. Goward what had yet to be done to complete the building. He was very displeased with it. He felt that a better building, worthy of the Congregational ideals, should be built at Cronulla. A few days later he wrote to Mr. Goward offering to give £1000 if fellow Congregationalists in New South Wales raised another £1000 in six weeks, so that new plans could

South Wales raised another £1000 in six weeks, so that new plans could be prepared and a more suitable edifice erected. That offer also contained another condition, that his name should not be divulged while he lived. It was a thrilling moment when the challenge was announced to the people of Cronulla, who enthusiastically accepted it.

The short time during which such a large sum could be raised was not to hold up the building of the church for too long. Within the prescribed time the money was collected, and three days later Mr. Todman's cheque was received. In due course the beautiful church, with hall, vestries, and furnishings complete, awaited the great day of its opening and dedication. Though the vision of the ever-enlarging population of the picturesque seaside town of Cronulla has not yet materialised, it had been felt that Mr. Goward's labour should not be forgotten as long as the church stood. For that reason the memorial tablet was fixed in the church last Saturday, on the same side as the tablet which commemorates the name of Mr. Todman and his magnificent gift.

This church at Cronulla, in a unique way, is really a Congregational responsibility. It was built by Congregational non-residents of Cronulla, who have made it a community church.
