

Your whole-souled devotion to your priestly duties, your care of the sick and dying, your solicitude for the poor, and the interest you have ever taken in the welfare of the young, have endeared you to us, and caused your name to be a household word for many years in this parish.

In asking you to accept the accompanying purse of sovereigns as a slight token of our appreciation, we do so with the sincere wish that your future may be blessed with health, happiness, and the energy to continue your good work.

We beg to remain, Rev. and dear Father, affectionately yours,

C. A. SHIEL, Chairman.

J. J. MARLOW, Hon. Secretary.

AUSTIN MISCALL

D. O'MAHONEY

P. FITZPATRICK

M. McKEY

JOHN DWYER

J. MCCURDY

J. O'CONNOR

For St. Patrick's Congregation, South Dunedin.

The address, which was accompanied by a cheque for £90, was tastefully illuminated by the Sisters of Mercy, and framed in carved oak and gold. Mr. Marlow, in presenting a purse of £10, accompanied by a silver-mounted walking stick, from the Catholic Young Men's Club, said that the young men desired in a special manner to mark their appreciation of the work which Father Coffey had done in their behalf. He had encouraged and helped them in every way to improve themselves, so that in after life they might be able to take their proper place in the world. He had devoted a great deal of his time to the young men, and it was owing to the great interest which he took in the society that it was now one of the largest in New Zealand. He would carry with him their heartiest wishes that he would have many years of happiness. (Applause). The chairman also made Father Coffey a presentation of a silver-mounted pocket-book on behalf of the Confraternity of the Children of Mary.

On the invitation of the chairman, Rev. Father Cleary briefly addressed the meeting. He was pleased to see a fellow-priest receive at the hands of a congregation such warm and cordial appreciation as had been extended to Father Coffey that evening. That splendid demonstration showed that Father Coffey had gained the esteem of the Catholics of South Dunedin. He felicitated Father Coffey on the manner in which his work was appreciated by the Catholics of South Dunedin, and congratulated the people on having such a splendid successor as Father Howard, who concealed beneath an extremely modest exterior many admirable qualities of heart and mind. (Applause).

Rev. Father Howard thanked Father Cleary for the kind remarks he had made regarding him, and also the meeting for the very cordial manner in which it had expressed its approval. In one sense he was fortunate in having to follow such a man as Father Coffey, as he found there was no work in construction, organisation, or building left to be done, the taste and solidity displayed in everything about were quite in keeping with the characteristics of Father Coffey himself. On the other hand he felt very diffident about filling the place of Father Coffey, who was most successful in making himself agreeable. It would not be for want of trying if he did not succeed, and while God spared him he would do all in his power to fulfil his duties towards the people. (Applause).

Father Coffey's Reply.

The Rev. Father Coffey, whose rising to reply was the signal for enthusiastic applause, said that he was somewhat at a loss as to what he would say. There were two occasions when a man felt in such a position; in the first place when he had got nothing to talk about, and secondly, when his thoughts are crowded in his mind, and his feelings get the better of his words, and he finds great difficulty in giving expression to his thoughts. He was in the latter position that evening—he could not give expression to his thoughts in words. A father did not require to remind his children that he loved them, nor need the children assure the father that they respected him. In the same way, after his stay of seven and a-half years in South Dunedin, having come among them as a stranger, it was not necessary to be told that there existed that good feeling between them that was referred to in the address. They had called him Father. He had tried to act as a father towards them, both in a spiritual and temporal sense. (Applause). In doing this he had to acknowledge faults and failings. When he commenced to work amongst them he set before his mind certain ideals, and he was perfectly satisfied he had failed to a certain extent in carrying them out. He had worked for the

good of the congregation to build up a suitable edifice and to pay off the debt upon it, but at the same time he had not neglected to visit the homes of the people or to care for their youth. It was his pleasing duty to accept their handsome testimonial, and to thank them for their kind expressions of esteem and regard. The people of South Dunedin knew full well that he had not enriched himself whilst amongst them, and he did not think he would enrich himself in the future, but he trusted that when they required his assistance in any way they would ask it, and they would find him right willing to help them, and render any assistance that might be in his power to give. (Applause). The address spoke of the work that had been done—the beautifying of the church, the building of the orphanage, the building of the convent, and the enlarging of the school. Now, as far as the church was concerned as a parish church, it was second to none in New Zealand. As for the Orphanage, it was a very necessary work, and he hoped they would be as kind and generous to the orphans in the future as they had been in the past. With regard to the convent, like many others who had left a place, he was leaving a heavy legacy to his successor. (Laughter). It was not he who had done the work referred to in the address, it was the people themselves; it was they who had done every bit of it. Sometimes a general who had won a battle got all the credit, whilst his soldiers did the work, in the same way he (the rev. speaker) could not have done this work without the help and co-operation of the people during the past seven years. He had not been more than a few weeks in the parish when he called a meeting to carry out some work, and five or six men were picked out to assist him, and it was the brightest thought in his mind to know that these men were to the fore ever since in every good work, that they were there present on the platform that evening. (Applause). He was sure they would be found working with his successor, and he could assure him that there is no parish in New Zealand he could find more willing workers than in that hall. He could assure them that he was very loth to leave South Dunedin, and he only wished that he could take his people with him. With regard to his work among the young men, he would take credit for it, as he worked very hard on their behalf, as he considered it a very necessary work. He was proud to know that to a certain extent it was successful. When first he conceived the idea of starting the society he saw many difficulties in the way, and among those who gave him advice and encouragement to go on with the work, and said the difficulties would eventually be overcome, was Mr. Gallaway, a gentleman who did not belong to the congregation. (Applause). The result was as anticipated, the society was most successful. He had always maintained the most friendly relations with his flock; in fact he did not think he had made a single enemy, and sometimes he felt as if this state of things did not require an examination of conscience to see if he were doing his duty and admonishing those who deserved it. He thanked the people from his heart for their great kindness towards him and their appreciation of his work. The chairman referred to the manner in which he had discharged his duties as a citizen, and he could only say that he had never sought to curry favor with anybody, but had always acted in a straightforward manner. After referring to the address from the Children of Mary, Father Coffey expressed the hope that the people would show the same kindly feelings towards his successor, that they would receive him with warm and open hearts, and he (Father Coffey) would promise that Father Howard on his part would fulfil his duty as a priest towards them, for Father Howard cloaked the most excellent qualities under a modest demeanor, and they would make no mistake in following his advice. In conclusion he referred to the respect that had been always shown him by all classes in South Dunedin, and although his duties had often taken him out late at night he had never been the object of a rough and insulting remark. (Applause). He thanked his fellow-priests for their kindness in coming there that evening, and again expressed the hope that his successor would meet with the same kindness and consideration that had been extended to himself, and that during Father Howard's stay amongst them the congregation would not only be doubled but trebled. (Applause).

On the motion of the Rev. Father Coffey a hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Marlow for presiding.

During the evening songs were contributed by Misses McLean, Mahoney, Heffernan, and Messrs. E. Mee, B. Knox, and Master O'Connor, a pianoforte solo by Mr. Knox, and a recitation by Mr. J. Dee.