

SACRED HEART COLLEGE, AUCKLAND

OPENING CEREMONY.

(From our own correspondent.)

Sunday, June 21, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, was a day to be long remembered in the history of the Church in this diocese, as the new college, erected by the Marist Brothers, was blessed and opened by his Lordship Bishop Lenihan. At 7 a.m. the Bishop blessed the building and celebrated the first Mass in the College Chapel. The Brothers and a number of the pupils received Holy Communion, several of the latter for the first time. The formal opening took place in the afternoon in the presence of a large assemblage of people. Three o'clock was fixed for the ceremony, and long before that hour crowds of people thronged the spacious grounds and examined the building throughout. The one verdict heard expressed was 'What a grand building and how spacious the grounds.' 'This a credit to the Brothers,' etc. Shortly before the appointed time Bishop Lenihan arrived, and was met and welcomed by the committee. The meeting was held in the dormitory, where a platform was erected for the speakers, behind which flags were hung, conspicuous amongst them was the Irish flag. His Worship the Mayor (the Hon. E. Mitchelson) took the chair. On his right was his Lordship the Bishop, and others on the platform were Father Benedict, O.P., Father Purton, O.S.B., Father Brodie, Sir G. Maurice O'Rourke, the Hon. J. A. Tole, Hon. T. Thompson, M.L.C., Messrs. F. E. Baume, M.H.R., and E. Mahoney, and Professor Tibbs (Auckland University).

The Mayor, who said it gave him very great pleasure to assist at the opening of such an admirable institution as the Sacred Heart College, referred to the progress made by the city of Auckland during the last 40 years. He could remember the time when it was considered a day's journey from Nelson street, where he was living, to and from any one of the bays in the Ponsonby district. Now there was every facility for getting up, and Auckland possessed many fine institutions. They all admired those responsible for the founding of the Roman Catholic College for their pluck. He understood that this was the first high school belonging to the Roman Catholic community in Auckland, and he hoped it would have a prosperous career. A boarding school had been greatly needed, and, judging by the excellent character of the accommodation that had been provided, the college would be popular with parents. Much credit was due to all concerned in the great undertaking, the realisation of which they were now celebrating.

Bishop Lenihan's Address.

His Lordship Bishop Lenihan said that his one thought during the seven years of his episcopate had been the establishment of such a school, which he considered absolutely necessary for the training of their youths and young men. As showing the interest of Roman Catholics in education, he mentioned that the primary schools erected in the past in Auckland had cost, in the aggregate, about £20,000. They would, therefore, be credited with being earnest and sincere in their efforts to educate the children. Throughout Australasia their schools had attracted attention. On Catholic intermediate education he could afford to be very brief. Other grave wants stared them in the face, but in spite of these the Catholics give ample evidence of the value they set on education. These intermediate schools, standing between primary and university instruction, were being multiplied, for they realised that, perfect as they wished their primary school system to be, it was but half complete as long as the children found no kindred atmosphere to pass on to when they left its protection. They wanted to see their youth instructed, not only in their religion, but perfected in every branch of science, for they were convinced that the world holds nothing more precious or more beautiful than the cultivated intellect of man, enlightened by faith. For this reason the Marist Brothers had joined with him in this matter. The land given by Mr. Hugh Coolahan, for religious and charitable purposes, was now being utilised for this purpose. While the law of the land prevented any hope of great emolument from the land, he had been able to lease a portion to the Brothers, and they had erected, at their own cost, a building, replete with every requirement for its success. The name of the Marist Brothers was a household one in Australasia. Their work at Hunter's Hill was so excellent that he felt no fear but that in a like manner they would reap the fruit of their labors here.

Hon. Mr. Tole on Religious Education.

Hon. J. A. Tole, B.A., LL.D., said it was extremely gratifying to him, not only as a Catholic, but as a member of several governing bodies of higher education in the Colony, and especially of the Auckland Grammar School, to offer his congratulations to his Lordship and the Marist Brothers on the accomplishment, so far, of the great work which the day's proceedings marked. The Marist Brothers deserved the highest praise for their indomitable courage and steadfastness shown in the promotion of education in this Colony. His Lordship had, on the occasion of laying the foundation stone a few months ago, fittingly recounted the progress of the Marist Order; and the erection of this building at their own cost, wrote another page in the historic progress of the

Order, was further evidence of their religious traditions, and another monument to perpetuate their unselfish devotion to the cause of education. This was the first Catholic establishment devoted to higher education in the diocese, and they might marvel at the delay, but he was glad to say it was not from lack of Catholic spirit or enterprise, but solely from want of money. No one better than the Mayor that day presiding knew the struggle of the early settlers, whilst, in addition, Catholics had, for conscience sake, to maintain their own schools as best they could, whilst contributing largely to support the State system. The absence of such a college as this, had placed Catholic youth at a great disadvantage. Years before the Auckland Grammar School was founded, Catholic parents had made sacrifices to send their sons out of the Colony to get a liberal education befitting a Catholic gentleman. Much, no doubt, had been done in that long interval to extend religious and primary Catholic education, but apparently nothing could be done in the way of higher education. They had reason, therefore, to rejoice, that so early in his Lordship's episcopate, he by determining to offer the site originally bestowed on the Church by that honored Catholic citizen, the late Mr. Hugh Coolahan, had aroused in the Brothers the enthusiasm to inaugurate this beginning of a new era for our Catholic youth, who he hoped would learn from their Irish and English history the great advantages they enjoyed, compared to the educational condition of their forefathers in Ireland a generation or two ago. This college must be efficient, it must be up-to-date, and it must produce the good sterling article, because there was plenty of keen rivalry in the numerous secondary schools around them, and if our Catholic youth were to take their place in educational status, their system of training must be of the best. In this college he was glad to know there were a number of excellent teachers, and that the curriculum would be comprehensive, including Civil Service and Matriculation standards up to the threshold of the university college. But in addition to this secular teaching, he was glad also to know that religious teaching was an important aim of the college. Mr. Tole said he was one of those who firmly believed—and a long public life of nearly thirty years had not removed the belief, that the old expression of 'religion going hand in hand with secular teaching' was an everlasting truth. He further said deliberately that if our youth did not receive their proper religious and moral bent while young, they would never get it afterwards. This joint religious and secular teaching which made up education was the true preparation for the battle of life. In this Colony we had developed and were developing education to the highest pitch from the tenderest years; we were widening the sphere of education in all its material aspects, in manual, technical, and commercial; we were training the observation, the memory, and mere reason, but not the will or heart or the ultimate aspects of the life that is so bountifully extended to us. Here the speaker quoted from a speech delivered some years ago by Lord Salisbury, in which the ex-Prime Minister laid it down that there should be the utmost opportunity given to educate the people according to whatever Christian denomination they belonged, instead of 'driving them away to the lifeless, boiled down, mechanical, unreal religious teaching in the Board Schools.' Having said so much (continued Mr. Tole) on the moral and mental aims of the college, which was a splendid brick building, he (Mr. Tole) had now to move the very concrete resolution placed in his hands, viz., 'that a subscription list be opened with the object of raising sufficient funds to furnish this college.' In support Mr. Tole said that in providing funds to build that noble college, Catholics were under a deep debt of gratitude to the Brothers, more especially as their services were given gratuitously. They had provided nearly £6000 out of their provincial funds for this structure alone, which was so admirably designed that it might be easily extended to accommodate students for generations to come. The Brothers' claim on their generosity was the more pressing at this juncture, for news had just been received from the Superiors at Home that their houses in France had been closed and their confreres rendered homeless. This college was not built for the benefit of the Marist Brothers, but for generations of Catholic youth. The Brothers did not need mere words of sympathy, but our material support, and he (Mr. Tole) asked those present to give as the Brothers had given, promptly and generously, according to their means. They wanted a sum of about £500 to furnish the college, and by an effort which the Brothers had never asked before, the sum could readily be obtained. Catholics hoped to accomplish much by this college, but it could only be done by the co-operation of the general community.

Sir Maurice O'Rourke's Speech.

Sir Maurice O'Rourke said it gave him sincere pleasure to be present and to inspect the fine building and noble site dedicated by his Lordship and the Marist Brothers to purposes of education. He learned that day for the first time that this site of some 40 or 50 acres was a gift of his old friend Mr. Hugh Coolahan for religious and educational purposes. I am particularly pleased (continued Sir Maurice) to see Mr. Mitchelson, as Mayor of the city of Auckland, presiding over this meeting and showing his sympathy with this effort for dissemination of education among the youth of this city. I am also glad to see here my old friend Mr. Darby, Mr. George Leahy, and the daughters of Mrs. Coffey. I miss one old friend, but I suppose his clerical duties detain him at his post in Onehunga. I refer to