

NEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL, PAHIATUA

The ceremonial opening of the newly erected Catholic school at Pahiatua took place recently in the presence of a large gathering. Mr. H. McSherry, as chairman of the school committee, in introducing on the occasion Archbishop O'Shea to the assembly, expressed appreciation of the presence of his Grace that day and also of Monsignor McKenna and Father Kimbell. Mr. McSherry explained that the new school building was designed and built as a memorial to Dean McKenna and a tribute to his 25 years of faithful service amongst them. When the erection of the building was first contemplated (said the speaker) there was some hesitation on the part of the committee about commencing the work, owing to the war and the difficulty anticipated in obtaining the necessary material for the successful carrying out of the work. As the tender for the work received was prohibitive, it was decided to employ day labor, and largely owing to the services of their architect, Mr. J. D. Wilson, the erection of the building had been carried out for £600 or £700 lower than the tender for the contract. That alone was a matter for congratulation. They were (said Mr. McSherry) indebted very much to Mr. Wilson, for he had relieved the responsibility of the committee very much and had himself supervised the delivery of the material and had been responsible for the whole work. They were all deeply grateful to him for his excellent services. Another satisfactory feature of the school (said Mr. McSherry) was that they would have enough money to pay for the building, so that when the children went to the school it would be free of debt. (Hear, hear.) That was cause for congratulation to the Catholics of the district. With the exception of £120 from the McCarthy trust the whole of the money had been subscribed by the Catholic people themselves. (Hear, hear.) Mr. McSherry concluded by expressing appreciation of the presence of his Grace on such an auspicious occasion.

His Grace Archbishop O'Shea expressed his great pleasure in being present to bless and dedicate the school, which, under the able direction and guidance of their pastor, Dean McKenna, they had so generously erected. That was another evidence of the increasing prosperity of the district and the determination of the Catholic body of New Zealand to support and maintain Catholic education. It was too, a tribute to the faithful labors of Dean McKenna for so many years that their noble building had been erected, and he regarded it as a great privilege to be present there that day.

Right Rev. Mgr. McKenna, in expressing his pleasure at being present to take part in the proceedings, mentioned that it was 32 years since he came to the district, and when he recalled these days and realised the progress made by the Church, they deserved every congratulation. In this connection he referred to the good work of Father Halpin, and to the late Mrs. Smalley, whose hospitality to the priest in those days could never be forgotten. Then, as the work proceeded the presbytery was built by the generosity of the parishioners of the district in the same manner as the school now erected had been built. There was also the convent with the Sisters as teachers in their school to impart religious education. These events were a sign of progress, and the present school was indeed a credit to the district. It was (said the speaker) a noble building, and he warmly congratulated the people on their achievement.

Very Rev. Dean McKenna then addressed the gathering, and expressed his pride at having such a school, where secular and religious knowledge could be imparted. He congratulated the people of Pahiatua, who had assisted so generously towards the erection of the school, which would prove a blessing to the children who would be educated there. Com-

menting on the statement made by Mr. McSherry that all the money had been contributed by Catholics, he mentioned that a sale of work had been held towards which both Catholics and non-Catholics had contributed. That had realised £200, and he thanked both. No appeal had been made to non-Catholics in connection with the erection of the building, but the help rendered by the non-Catholics and the kindness extended to him during the past 25 years he would never forget. They also owed a debt of gratitude to Mr. J. D. Wilson for his continued watchfulness during the whole erection of the building.

Address by Archbishop O'Shea.

Addressing the great gathering (says the *Pahiatua Herald*) his Grace Archbishop O'Shea said the position taken up by the Catholic Church with regard to education had been put before the public on many occasions, but it was so consistently ignored by politicians and educationalists and so often misrepresented that it might be well for him once more to set it forth on an occasion such as this. The Catholic Church held that the child belonged to God in the first place, the parents were the second owners, because under God they had brought the child into the world. The State, in relation to the child, came only after the parent. The parent had the right to educate his child as he thought best and the State could not legally interfere with that right, except on occasions when the parent neglected his duty. The State might help the parent in the work of education by building schools, colleges, and universities, but the State was bound to take into account the wishes of the parents as to the kind of education that was to be given to the children in those institutions and where the State asked Catholics—as it did in New Zealand—to contribute a certain sum of money towards the education of the people, it ought to spend the money contributed by Catholic parents on the education of the children in their school. That the parents conscientiously asked for. (Hear, hear.) This was only just, according to reason and common-sense.

Continuing, the speaker said the Catholic body of this Dominion was compelled to contribute about £180,000 per annum towards the education of the people, and as the Catholics could not use the State schools and colleges for their own children, except under exceptional circumstances in certain country districts, it followed that the money contributed by Catholic parents was spent on the education of other people's children. In addition to this they (as Catholics) had to educate their children in their own voluntary schools, and thus they saved the State probably another £100,000 a year. That meant that the non-Catholic parents of the Dominion were having their children much more cheaply educated at the expense of the Catholic body. "Is this fair? Is it just?" asked the Archbishop.

The Catholic demand with regard to education was not so unreasonable as some people would have them believe (continued the speaker). "We, as Catholics only ask that the money contributed to education by the Catholic parents should be spent by the State on the education of the Catholic children. We do not ask for a farthing to be spent on the secular education of Catholic children, much less to be spent on the training of their children in their holy religion. They did think that when the State, as in this country, asked the Catholic body to contribute a certain amount of money that the State ought to spend that money on the education of the Catholic children according to the wishes of the Catholic parents who contributed the money. It had been said that in maintaining their own system of Catholic schools they were not patriotic, and were not serving the best interests of their country. On the contrary (continued the Archbishop), the duty of the Church makes it incumbent upon them to promote the advancement of their country. Upon what foundation did the welfare of any country de-

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