

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN CHRISTCHURCH

BLESSING AND OPENING OF NEW SCHOOL.

There was a large gathering on last Sunday afternoon at the Catholic Church and School grounds, Spencer Street, Addington, to assist at the solemn blessing and opening, by his Lordship Bishop Brodie, of the new buildings of the parish school. Two large and airy classrooms and cloakrooms have recently been built, and the paths surrounding the buildings have been asphalted, involving the expenditure of £1070. Members of both branches of the H.A.C.B. Society, wearing their regalia, formed a guard of honor to the Bishop upon his arrival. His Lordship was accompanied by Very Rev. Dr. Kennedy, Adm., Father O'Hare (Kumara), and Father Long. The Very Rev. Dr. Kennedy congratulated the people of Addington upon the acquisition of such substantial additions to their schools, and read a statement of the financial position. This showed that, although the new buildings involved such a heavy expenditure, the present debt upon the whole of the parochial buildings and furniture was only £630. He also referred in kindly words to past benefactors of the parish, mentioning in particular the late Mr. D. Campbell and also Mr. L. Hickey, and commending the zeal and energy of Mr. Considine and Miss Bridget Sloan.

Addressing the assemblage, his Lordship Bishop Brodie said:—The ceremony at which we are assisting this afternoon marks an advance in the great work of Catholic education. It may be interesting to state that the Addington School is one of seven educational institutions in course of erection in the city and suburbs of Christchurch. Woolston School has just been completed and opened; the Cathedral Schools are now in course of erection; a new school has been opened at Riccarton under the direction of the Sisters of Mercy; another school will be furnished at St. Mary's, Manchester Street; Papanui School is being enlarged, and St. Bede's College is making steady progress towards completion. This activity in the construction of Catholic buildings can be considered very opportune and appropriate at this juncture of the world's history. The world is undergoing a process of reconstruction, and the greatest minds are deeply exercised as to the form that that reconstruction is taking in order that the calamity of another world-devastating war may be averted. In the earnest consideration which this subject is receiving, it is well to remember that the work of education plays a most important part in the organisation of the world, and in the work of reconstruction education must not be overlooked. The extent of the work of Catholic education in Christchurch may be understood from the fact that in the Cathedral parish alone there are schools providing accommodation for no less than 1000 Catholic children, and when it is realised that for such a work the State would be confronted with an outlay of no less than £7000 per year we can form some idea of the sacrifice this work must mean to the Catholic community of this city. The education question is indeed a burning one. For Catholics it has meant a long and hard struggle to meet the outlay occasioned by the work of erecting and maintaining Catholic schools in addition to the burden borne by our people, in common with other taxpayers of the community; but the burden has been courageously faced, the difficulties of pioneering days seem to have passed by, and Catholics, in their intense love and enthusiasm for their holy faith, take a pardonable pride in the progress and advancement of the work of Catholic education. If the financial sacrifice is great, it does not prevent Catholics from expressing their due appreciation of the greater sacrifice made by our religious Brothers and Sisters, who devote and consecrate their lives to the great cause of Catholic education. It would be well for our legislators, our public men, and all interested in the social well-being to make a study of the subject of education. Sometimes the denominational schools are made the butt

of unkind and hostile criticism, conveying the impression that denominational schools threaten the destruction of the State schools and constitute a barrier to true national education. Such criticism is the result of insufficient knowledge of the vast question of national education and its underlying principles. The study of national systems in various countries impresses us with the fact that denominational schools can, and do, form part of the national system, and tend to promote its greater thoroughness and efficiency. This we find verified in England, Scotland, and Ireland, in Holland and Belgium, in Canada and South Africa, where the national and denominational systems coexist and have reached a state of the highest efficiency. The primary end of denominational schools, as far as Catholics are concerned, is to ensure that Catholic children will be brought up with a thorough knowledge of their holy faith. Experience teaches that, under existing social and industrial conditions, it is impossible for the majority of parents to attend to the religious instruction of their children; the school then must supplement the work of the parents, and the ideal school conditions are those under which the child will advance in secular knowledge and, at the same time, receive a thorough course of instruction in the teachings of holy faith. The war has brought denominational schools before us in a somewhat new light. The impression seems to have been abroad that denominational schools did not foster a spirit of citizenship, but during the war the past pupils of these schools have had an opportunity of showing to the world that they possessed this spirit of citizenship in the highest degree. The numbers offering for service in defence of their country have been most creditable, and the results of the various religious schools in New Zealand have shown that the spirit of citizenship and patriotism existed in the highest degree. For example, St. Patrick's, Wellington, has on its roll of honor no less than 454 past pupils; the Sacred Heart College, Auckland, a younger institution, has 289; while the Marist Brothers' School, of Christchurch, with a roll of 288 old boys, sent no less than 200 of these to the Front before the introduction of conscription. Figures such as these—and these figures are equalled by all the denominational schools of New Zealand—show that in our denominational schools the State has a valuable adjunct and source of ready help should any national disaster or crisis arrive. When it is considered then that many of our boys have laid down their lives for the cause of the Empire, many have returned to their homes bearing the marks of wounds received in defence of their country, and that those who have survived the war will be the fathers of future generations of true and devoted citizens, it must be admitted that it is not in the interest of good legislation or good government to penalise or discourage institutions which have done such great work for the country's honor and defence.

Several of the Sisters of the Mission, by whom the school is conducted, were present, and had charge of the children, who sang several hymns. With the aid of a band of willing workers afternoon tea was served. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament concluded the ceremony.

MIKEEN'S QUESTIONS.

Can I tell you when will the days get long?
And the cold be gone, and the birds make song?
Little curly-head, with your eyes of blue
And your dimples two, and the smile of you!
Sure, 'tis Spring
When a man's boot can cover nine daisies.

Now can you tell me what time of the year
Far mountains seem near, and the skies are clear,
Bees hum their tune in the blaze of noon,
Small son, that will be a man all too soon?
Sure, 'tis June
When ten bare pink toes cover nine daisies!

—L. M. MCCRAITH, in *New Ireland*.

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