

several priests, referring them to the statements made in the letter. His Lordship showed our representative the telegrams he had received in reply.

Dean Carew telegraphed:—'Letter absolutely untrue as far as we are concerned. We took no part whatever in election.' Later on the Dean sent another wire to the effect that the letter was a tissue of unmitigated falsehoods, and was unworthy of notice.

The replies from the different parish priests were to the effect that there was absolutely no justification for the statements made in the letter. One priest wired that there had been notoriously heaving betting on the Seddon v. Michel contest, 'hence these tears.'

Referring to the leading article dealing with the question of 'sectarianism in politics,' Bishop Grimes said that the editor of the *Press* had suggested that he had been misinformed as to the antipathy that existed to Sir Joseph Ward on account of his being a Roman Catholic. He could only say that he had been too well informed. He had positive information, from the best authority, that it was being urged that the great fault of Sir Joseph Ward, who was admittedly head and shoulders above his opponents as a statesman, was that he was a Catholic. This had been said by non-Catholics within his hearing. He had been told by a non-Catholic, one of the leading men of a certain district, that a desirable candidate was not returned for two reasons—first, because he was a Catholic, and second, because the leader of his party was a Catholic. 'Assertions have been made as to the actions of clergymen,' said the Bishop, 'actions which I know did not exist except in the imagination of those who made the assertions. These things were repeated to me, and I made the remarks I did make because something I had said previously had been misconstrued. I pointed out that Catholics had a great power in their hands, in regard to their right of voting, and I asked them to wield that power as they thought fit, before God, their conscience, and their country. I never asked them to vote one way or the other. I certainly did protest, as I would in the case of any member of my Church who was recognised as possessing the qualities of a statesman, against a man being hounded out of his place simply because of the unpardonable crime of being a Catholic. It is a very deplorable thing that in a young country like this bigotry should be brought to bear on our politics, and that a man's chances should be lessened simply because he is a Catholic. The advance of patriotic, upright citizens should not be barred because they happen to be of this or that religion.'

The following letter, which explains itself, appeared in the *Press* of the same date:—

Sir,—My attention has been called to the following paragraph which has appeared in the editorial columns of your paper:—'A Dunedin correspondent, on whom we can rely, informs us that every Roman Catholic in Mr. Millar's constituency was seen on his behalf during the last two days before the election,' the inference being made clear from the preceding and subsequent paragraphs, viz., that undue influence was exerted by the Catholic clergy on Mr. Millar's behalf.'

As one of the clergy referred to I wish in the most public manner possible to give the statement an absolute and unqualified denial, and if 'the correspondent on whom you can rely' will prove that either I or any one of my fellow clergy called upon 'one' not 'every one' of the Roman Catholic voters and used any 'influence,' not 'undue influence,' or that this was done in the Church or out of it, I will present such a 'reliable correspondent' with £10, to be given by him as a Christmas gift to the Dunedin Hospital. I hope this will fix once for all a most base falsehood. I have stated facts. I have not denied the right of clergymen, as other men, to use their influence when and where they may think it necessary.—Yours, etc.,

JAMES COFFEY,
Administrator.

St. Joseph's Cathedral, Dunedin, December 24th.

[Neither we nor our Dunedin correspondent said that the priests canvassed personally for Mr. Millar. Doubtless the work was done by lay representatives of the Roman Catholic Church.—Ed. the *Press*.]

PRESENTATION TO DEAN O'DONNELL, ASHBURTON

(From our own correspondent.)

For some considerable time past the health of our much respected and highly esteemed pastor, Very Rev. Dean O'Donnell, has not been what his parishioners would desire, consequently the opinion of his medical advisers that absolute rest was imperative came as no great surprise. When this became known by his parishioners, a deputation waited on the Catholic Young Men's Club with the object of taking steps towards assisting Dean O'Donnell to take a very necessary rest from his arduous duties. Strong committees were formed, and collectors appointed in every portion of the parish, an executive committee being presided over by Mr. M. J. Burgess, with Mr. S. Madden as secretary. Due praise for the very successful result must be given to Mesdames W. Soal and D. McCormick, these two ladies collecting the greater portion of the money subscribed. The executive committee decided on the presentation being more of a private character, consequent on their desire to relieve the Dean of any undue excitement. On Sunday, December 24, the executive officers and interested friends met in the schoolroom for the purpose of making the presentation of an address and a well-filled purse of sovereigns to our esteemed pastor.

In making the presentation, the chairman (Mr. M. J. Burgess) expressed his sincere regret for Dean O'Donnell's ill-health, and earnestly hoped that their worthy pastor would rapidly improve, so that ere long he would resume his place among his flock who esteemed him so highly. Mr. Burgess concluded by handing the Dean a handsomely filled purse of sovereigns from his parishioners in all parts of the district, accompanied by the following address:—'Rev. and dear Father,—We the undersigned parishioners learn with regret that your health has been so unsatisfactory for some time that your doctor has advised you to take a lengthened rest in order to recuperate. The duties involved in the working of this large parish have, we recognise, materially assisted to impair your health. During the 20 years that you have labored in Ashburton as our parish priest, you have been unable to take any adequate rest, and we wish to express our sympathy with you and appreciation of your long and devoted service, by asking your acceptance of this small gift. It is our fond wish that you may have an enjoyable and beneficial rest, and we look forward to your return, restored and invigorated, to long labor amongst us.'

'Be beg respectfully to subscribe ourselves, Rev. and dear Father, your devoted people, M. J. Burgess (chairman), S. Madden (secretary), F. J. Pender (assistant secretary), A. T. Robertson (treasurer), P. Hanrahan, sen., L. Hanrahan, H. P. Madden, F. K. Cooper, N. Fitzgerald, Mrs. McCormick, Mrs. Soal.'

Dean O'Donnell, in replying, thanked one and all for their handsome gift. He could assure them as the result of a few weeks' stay, he had just finished at Hanmer, he already felt much better in health. For many reasons he desired to be ever near his Ashburton friends, consequently he would not be leaving the Dominion on this occasion. He had received nothing but the greatest kindness from the people of Ashburton, words, failing him to express his gratitude. In conclusion, he trusted to be soon again amongst them, and wished all present the joys of the festive season.

Dean O'Donnell left Ashburton on Friday for Fairlie, thence journeying to Mount Cook Hermitage, where he intends sojourning for some little time.

In this issue will be noticed an advertisement intimating that Messrs. Lusk and Moriarty have commenced business in Timaru as architects and building surveyors. It will be remembered that Mr. Moriarty carried out the building of the handsome Catholic church which now adorns Timaru....