

ARCHBISHOP O'SHEA IN TARANAKI

There was a very large gathering in the Town Hall, Stratford, on Monday evening, September 15, at the complimentary conversazione tendered to his Grace Archbishop O'Shea (says the *Taranaki Daily News*). The Mayor, Mr. W. P. Kirkwood, presided, and there were also on the platform his Grace the Archbishop, Rev. Father Cahill (Eltham), Rev. Father Maples, Messrs. W. G. Malone and M. Power (vice-president of the Catholic Federation and the oldest parishioner).

The Mayor, addressing the Archbishop, expressed his pleasure in presiding at this large gathering of citizens to do honor to the distinguished guest who, by his visit, had conferred an honor on Stratford. He tendered his Grace a very hearty welcome, and trusted that this visit would be but a forerunner of others.

Mr. W. G. Malone then read and presented an illuminated address, signed by Mr. G. E. Wilson, on behalf of the whole of the people of the Catholic parish, welcoming his Grace and congratulating him upon his elevation to a position of such eminence in the Church, also expressing the loyalty of his people in this part of the archdiocese.

The Archbishop, replying, said he was indeed very grateful for this splendid reception and welcome which had been given him on the occasion of his visit to this town since his elevation to the high position of Coadjutor-Archbishop of Wellington. He thanked in the first place the Mayor for presiding at this welcome and for the kind wishes spoken in such eloquent words in extending the welcome of this town to him. His Grace said he had already experienced some of the Mayor's kindness that afternoon, when he had been entertained by Mr. Kirkwood and shown one of the beauty spots of the vicinity, spending a most delightful afternoon. He thanked sincerely all who had come to welcome him in this way, and especially those—and he understood there were many in the audience—who were not Catholics. Amongst his best friends he had always counted many people of other denominations, and whilst he had always defended the faith which he professed as being the best calculated to bring happiness to all members of the community, he trusted that no word that he had even spoken, and no act of his in the future, would ever be construed into an attack on the people who did not believe as he did in matters of religion. He tendered his thanks for the beautiful address presented, and for the kind words of welcome and loyalty contained in it. Reference had been made to his early connection with the province of Taranaki, and pleasure had been expressed that one who was a Taranaki boy had been raised to a position of such high dignity. It was quite true that, though not born in Taranaki, he had spent the whole of his childhood not very far—only some twenty miles—from Stratford. He had gone to school there and been brought up under the shadow of our beautiful mountain, till the time came for him to be sent to college. Since then he had visited the province several times, and each time, he was pleased to say, he had seen signs of greater progress. The province had made progress in every way in the last few years, and it needed no prophet to say that in a very few years Taranaki would gain pre-eminence among the provinces of the Dominion, and that a great—a very great—future was before Taranaki, which was so blessed by Nature in every way. He was especially pleased to see the great progress made by the Catholic Church in this province, and in the town of Stratford particularly. His Grace recalled the time when Stratford was not even a separate parish, when, indeed, there was but one parish all the way from New Plymouth to Wanganui. It seemed not so very many years ago since, passing through here as a boy, he had noticed the great destruction wrought by the fire, which had almost wiped out the town. But with that courage which had always characterised them, the settlers had set to work to rebuild it, and the town which rose from its ashes was now one of the finest and most solid towns in this province. Whilst dealing with the progress of the parish, the Archbishop said thanks were due to the

priests who had been in charge—Dean McKenna, who had built the first portion of the church; their late pastor, Father Tracy, who had done so much for the parish and worked so earnestly in it for so many years; and their present devoted, learned, and zealous parish priest, Father Maples. Thanks were due to them, and to the people for their co-operation, which had resulted in such great strides being made, until now Stratford had church, schools, convent, and presbytery equal to those of any parish in the whole archdiocese. But the progress so far would be more than equalled by the progress of the future, because anything taken in hand by this people in the cause of their religion was taken up alike by the rich and by the poor, and, under the guidance of their pastors, greater progress would be achieved in the future. He was particularly pleased to see the work done in the direction of education, which was the great work of the Church in this young land. The first principle of religion was, to his mind, couched in the words: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God . . . and all things else shall be added unto you.' Catholics believed that the only true system of education was one which would not develop one set of faculties alone, but all the faculties—the moral as well as the intellectual. Education, to be worthy of the name, must be religious education; and he was pleased to see the sacrifices that were being made on behalf of that cause. This was what made Catholics tax themselves twice over to provide for their children secular education to the satisfaction of the State inspectors, and at the same time a thorough grounding in the principles of their faith. In again thanking the Mayor, the committee who had organised this gathering, and the performers, his Grace said he would always look on the progress of the town and the parish with the greatest interest. He hoped God would bless all their undertakings in every way, and that in this part of New Zealand all would work together for the benefit of the province and the good of this grand young country which we all loved so well.

A capital musical programme was submitted, the items by the Convent School pupils being particularly enjoyable. The choir sang 'Ecce Sacerdos Magnus' as the Archbishop and attendant clergy walked to the stage, and then followed—Pianoforte duet, 'Tancredi,' Misses A. Robson and W. Fitzgerald; song, 'The swallows,' Miss E. Tocker; vocal quartet, 'Sweet and low,' Mrs. C. Massey, Miss A. Sullivan, Messrs. M. P. Anderson, and T. A. Lonergan; song, 'Thora,' Mr. T. A. Wilson; tambourine dance, Convent School pupils; vocal duet, 'Tired,' Misses V. Miscall and A. Sullivan; chorus, 'De ole banjo,' choir; pianoforte solo, 'Frühlingserauschen,' Miss W. Fitzgerald; song, 'The Rosary,' Mrs. C. Massey; dance, 'Sunshine and rain,' Convent School pupils; song, 'A perfect day,' Miss M. Sheehan; song, 'Anchored,' Mr. T. A. Lonergan; chorus, 'Good night,' the choir. Miss Agnes Robson played the accompaniments, contributing in no small measure to the success of the programme. The committee deserves all praise for the successful carrying out of the function.

On Tuesday afternoon, September 16, the Catholic church in Opunake was packed to the doors with a large and representative congregation to welcome his Grace the Coadjutor-Archbishop of Wellington on his first visit to this remote part of the diocese (says the *Opunake Times*).

In Opunake there were presented 35 candidates for Confirmation, some of whom came from Pihama. Punctually at 2 p.m. his Grace entered the sanctuary and gave a brief exposition of the nature and effects of Sacraments in general and of Confirmation in particular. At the close of this address, the Archbishop examined the candidates in their knowledge of Christian doctrine. This examination consisted in some half-dozen questions put to each child, who, standing up, answered in presence of the whole congregation. A somewhat trying ordeal, but one which all passed through satisfactorily. His Grace in administering Confirmation was assisted by the Rev. Fathers Cahill and Menard.

Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament followed, when the choir sang the 'O Salutaris' and the 'Tantum Ergo.'

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