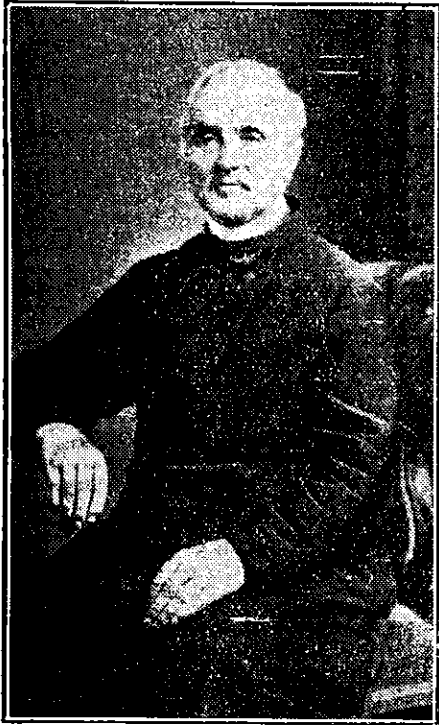


The Church in New Zealand

THE CHURCH IN TARANAKI: A SKETCH PREPARED FOR THE JUBILEE OF THE PARISH OF HAWERA.

(Continued from February 25.)



THE LATE FATHER LAMPILA, S.M.
Whose work in Taranaki was referred to in our issue for February 11.

THE PARISH OF HAWERA.

The people of Hawera boast that their town is one of the most prosperous in the Dominion, its dairying lands are certainly the finest. The Maori word Hawera means a burnt place. It was so called from the strategy of the Natives, who at dawn one day in the early 'sixties set fire to the fern and scrub on the windward side of the sleeping British army, hoping under cover of the smoke screen to rush the camp and surprise and capture the general and his staff. The scheme failed, but the place retains the name.

In the neighborhood of Hawera there are many historic spots. Te-Ngutu-O-Te-Manu, about ten miles distant, was the scene of the heroic death of the gallant Von Tempsky and of the heroism of Father Rolland. The honey-combed tunnels near the mouth of the Waingongoro, about five miles distant, inspire many of the thrilling reminiscences of our veterans. Turuturu-Mokau, not more than one mile from the site selected for the new railway station, was one of the most interesting spots in the Maori war. It has lately been declared a public park, and will soon be as remarkable for the scenic beauty to which it lends itself as for its historic associations. The late Lawrence Milnroe, a benefactor of the Church, signalised himself here, as did also many of his co-religionists.

The parish of Hawera was founded in June 1875, with Father Pertuis as priest in charge. It is easy to imagine the thoughts that filled the mind of this gentle son of the Church's eldest daughter as he came to take charge of a little flock in this the youngest of all

lands. As he topped the hill at Nukumarua and gazed upon the wide waters of the Tasman on his left, and the verdant fields to his right and on the foreground extending to the lordly mountain, whose sides swept down in perfect, unbroken curves, he must have rejoiced that his new home had beauties

altar steps would hear and feel nature accompanying him with antiphonal harmony. To those who love God nature is no blind, destructive force; in its every phase it is own brother to him who is religious with the religion of the gentle Saint of Assisi, and Father Pertuis was a man after St. Francis' own heart. He had his little flower patch very soon, and his white rabbits which he kept to the end of his life. Many must have been the little sermons he preached to them on the love of God; the flowers must send their fragrance up to Him, and the rabbits return thanks for the sweet herbs: "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord: praise



FIRST CATHOLIC CHURCH AND PRESBYTERY AT HAWERA.
SHOWING ADDITION of TWO-STORIED BUILDING ERECTED by FATHER RYAN

even greater than that which he had left. A man of deep religious faith, he was in sympathy with nature; nature was to him no meaningless mystery. The verdant fields through which he travelled, the singing birds that made the air vocal with their welcome to him, the countless stars that sparkled like patines of bright gold when he arrived in Hawera that frosty night in June, the glorious mountain whose snows shone in the full moon, the moaning of the sea as it rolled upon the beach at Waingongoro, all spoke to him of the Immutable God Who was looking in love through the lightly covered veil on the first priest who would represent Him on the beautiful plains. No doubt he raised his voice on that first night and joined it with the voices of the waves and of the stars in humble praise and thanksgiving to his and their Creator. And when morning came, his first morning in Hawera, and Chanticleer had aroused the faithful to sing their hymn of Lauds, he arose quickly, set up his little altar, and gave to God the highest praise that earth could give, long before the rising sun had turned the top of Egmont into gold. Ever since that morning fifty years ago, the daily Mass has been offered on this beautiful plain, and every priest as he ascended the

and exalt Him above all for ever."

He began his pastoral work in a very humble way, for the Catholics in Hawera and the plains were few and far between. A small cottage, shifted from the Waihi cemetery, formed a combined church and presbytery, the whole measuring eighteen feet by sixteen. It was not rain-proof; the Archbishop on the occasion of his first visit had to be continually shifting the altar stone to escape the drip, drip as he was saying Mass. Father Pertuis soon built a beautiful little Gothic church, which was long an object of admiration, and much of whose timber still remaining is the soundest in the locality. I have said that on his first night he must have joined his voice to that of the stars in thanksgiving; he was a good astronomer and had a fine telescope. In those days it would appear that most of the Hawera settlers thought that all star-gazers were mentally unbalanced, and many jokes have been handed down, which, though they were meant to be at the expense of the priest, tell only against the teller. He had the habit of rushing into the neighboring houses and dragging out their members to gaze through his "spy-glass" at some wonder he had discovered in the heavens. I do not know how