

Hardy, M.L.C., and Mr. J. Connolly also spoke in laudatory terms and offered their congratulations to the pastor.

Father Price on rising to reply was received with very hearty applause. He said that that was the most trying moment of the 25 years of his priesthood. His chief difficulty was that he could not sufficiently thank them for that very singular expression of their good-will towards him. As for testimonials, there was no need of any such thing to manifest their feelings towards him. His intercourse with them since he came to the parish was a daily testimonial to him of their kindness, their forbearance towards him on account of his many faults, and their generous loyalty to him as their priest. When he said he thanked them, he asked them to take those words and to understand them in their best and fullest sense, charged with all possible sincerity and gratitude. As to what had been said in the addresses, and had been said in many letters he had received, concerning his merits and the value of his past services, and concerning the esteem and affection that were felt for him, he could truly say that to him it was a kind of mystery; for knowing that he was in reality nothing more than what he was in the sight of God, he could not think of himself as favorably as others thought of him. Nevertheless he was grateful for all that had been so kindly said of him; and, however undeserving he might be of such great praise, it was certainly a noble evidence of the goodness of those whose judgment of him was so generous and so affectionately kind. He had always prayed that wherever he might be summoned to work no needless strife, no friction or misunderstanding with men of good will would ever blight the parish or grieve the Holy Spirit. God had granted that. The people of that parish might be struggling and scattered but they were united and earnest, and with such elements to work with how was it possible not to achieve some success? He hoped to be with them to the end, and when his day's work was finished and God Himself had put him to bed, he hoped to live long in their remembrance.

At Methven the jubilee celebrations commenced at eight o'clock. The hall, which was densely crowded by the parishioners and the many non-Catholic friends of Father Price, was festooned and gaily decorated for the occasion by the ladies of the parish. The chair was taken by Mr. Jerome McAnulty. The proceedings opened with a jubilee chorus by the Convent School children and the presentation, on their behalf, of an address and case of plate by Master Charles Robins and Miss Sadie Compton. During the evening the Christchurch Quartette (Messrs. H. Matheson, J. Joll, R. Beveridge, and A. L. Cropp) sang several glees, all of which were highly appreciated and encored by the audience. Songs and instrumental items were given by Miss Duff and the pupils of the local convent. The piano responded to the masterly touch of Mr. R. A. Horne, of the Bristol Piano Company. At the conclusion of the musical programme, an address, similar to that presented at Rakaia, was read by Mr. P. Quinn, and a heavy wallet of notes, the gift of the parishioners of Methven and outside friends, both clerical and lay, was presented to the jubilarian by Mr. Thos. Morland.

The chairman referred to the many sterling and priestly qualifications of Father Price, and mentioned that the wallet represented the spontaneous offerings of a generous and responsive people. He expressed the hope that Father Price would enjoy his well-earned holiday, and that he would return renewed in vigor and strength to continue his good work on behalf of the people and the parish for many a year. Several of the parishioners also spoke conveying their good wishes to their pastor. Then followed speeches by his Lordship the Bishop, Dean Hyland, and Fathers Cooney and Murphy.

Father Price, who received a tremendous ovation, replied as follows:—

My Lord, Very Rev. and Rev. Fathers, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—In the first place I thank you very sincerely for the cordial reception you have given me this evening. Although I cannot expect you to enter into my personal feelings to-night, or realise the ordeal a priest must pass through in listening to such flattering addresses as we have just heard, still, ordinary gratitude demands that I should have some appreciation of what you have all done for me. Although no priest can reach his silver jubilee

without much deep thought and religious feeling, still, I had little idea some weeks past that there would be such an enthusiastic and formal recognition of this personal event. I am sure you will credit me with sufficient common sense to be allowed to say (knowing myself as I hope I do) that I have put down much of the warmth of feeling and generous overlooking of my faults to-night to your large-mindedness and exceptional charity. I believe it is owing to your greater reverence for the priesthood than the priest. No one outside the Catholic Church can possibly gauge what a priest is to his people and the people to their priest. How is it explained? We have not to go far for a solution. A priest's life in the Catholic Church and in a Catholic congregation is in the nature of a parental life. The priest belongs to every family. No man can replace him. I take it that a priest is ordained—and especially when put in charge of a parish—to have his sympathies, hopes, and energies in trust for the many and not for the few. This is the lesson we may all read in the life of the great Master of Souls, and one which it behoves us all to copy even in our humble and halting fashion. This is the reason that the priest has, figuratively speaking, not only the key of the homes, but, what is more valuable, if only rightly understood and applied, the key of the hearts of his parishioners. This explains, I believe, the warm and fervid drafting of such addresses as we hear from time to time read to priests. Every priest, then, ought to know how much is to be discounted in such presentations, and how, if he wants his real value, he must seek it in the eyes of God and in the balance of the sanctuary. I know that with you, my friends, you have often taken "the will for the deed," and to-night the heart has run away with the head. Without wishing to moralise too much on such a joyous occasion as we are met here to commemorate, still, when I review the past quarter of a century, and see many distinct landmarks standing out before me, I am conscious that I owe all to God and nothing to myself. It has been my happiness to have received much kindly sympathy and much co-operation and hearty good-will in the different parts of Our Lord's vineyard where I have been summoned to work.

The least said about oneself the better, but if I may introduce the personal pronoun; I am pleased to be able to state that during the past four years and seven months we have managed—owing to collections and sales of work—to reduce the debt (in the Methven district alone) by £2500, and its complete removal is only a matter of a few months. That is something comforting for reflection. But to whom really is the credit due? To you, my generous and self-sacrificing friends who have responded during the past few years to an altogether exceptional series of calls, steady, heavy, and persistent. My efforts would have entailed much more labor and anxiety had my lot not fallen among a kind, faithful, and generous people, and I cannot help but see that the presentation made me to-night and the kind things said of me reflect far more credit upon yourselves than upon me. Now a few words for the monetary offering. No priest, I trust, would look at such a gift purely for its intrinsic value; but it is a matter of some congratulation for the committee that of the large sum collected, I believe the bulk of it has flowed in spontaneously from the congregation, from the children, the choir, and some outside well-wishers and friends. It is a satisfaction to a priest to know that he has the good wishes and the good will of his congregation. I cannot fittingly express my personal obligation to you for such a generous recognition of the years—happy years—I have spent in your midst, and for the constant source of edification that your lives have afforded me. I accept your gift as a pledge of your kindness and good feeling towards me, and I shall look upon the spirit in which you have offered it to me as an incentive to devote myself more completely to your service in the future. And now I can imagine some good people among you saying: "But what does Father Price intend doing with the money?" That is a question which will naturally occur to many minds. As to-night I mean to have no secrets from you, allow me to anticipate some friends in the audience. I trust and believe that a priest's happiness does not consist in the multiplicity of his acquirements so much as in the fewness of his wants, but there are times when he needs complete rest if he is to continue to give his best work to the parish.