

CONVENT OF MERCY, WESTPORT

OPENING CEREMONIES

(From our own correspondent.)

On September 24, the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, the splendid convent of the Sisters of Mercy was solemnly blessed and opened by his Grace Archbishop Redwood, assisted by the following clergy: The Ven. Archpriest Walshe (Westport), the Very Rev. Dean Carew (Grey-mouth), and the Rev. Fathers Hickson (Reefton), McDonnell (Abaura), and Malloy (Westport). Favored by a gloriously bright sunny day, the impressive ceremony was performed under the most favorable auspices.

The solemn ceremonies commenced at 3 p.m. at St. Canice's Church, which was crowded to its utmost capacity.

After the choir, under the conductorship of Mr. J. Lynch, had sung the 'Veni Creator,' his Grace Archbishop Redwood delivered a brief but eloquent sermon. He expressed his thanks to the large gathering which had assembled to assist at the opening of the new convent. The attendance was proof of the great interest they took in the institution and of their appreciation of the great work the good Sisters were doing in their midst. With some courage and risk the Sisters had undertaken the erection of a noble building which would be an ornament to the town and a credit to the Catholic community of Westport. The Sisters had to bear the brunt of the burden, but they had vowed themselves to the service of God and would work in the future as they had done in the past. The Sisters naturally expected the people would realise the good work they were doing amongst them, the good they had wrought in the past, and the good they had in store for them in the future. There was no work of more importance than that of imparting a good, sound Christian education. The Sisters devoted their whole lives in a special manner to the service of God, and the greater part of their work was the education of the young, and they were courageous enough to erect a large building to suit the purpose. His Grace described the origin of the Order of Sisters of Mercy. The Order was formed under the patronage of the Order of Our Lady of Ransom, established in olden times to ransom Catholics from slavery to infidels in the East. The Sisters of the present day likewise devoted themselves to the work of charity—to the relief of the sick, poor, and needy, and sometimes went on to the battlefield, as they did in the Crimea. In this country their chief work was education, and it was necessary they should acquire suitable buildings for their special needs. It might be thought that the new convent was exaggerated in size, but it was to be the headquarters of the Order for the West Coast. In addition to giving a general education needful for everyday life, the Sisters would teach the fine arts. In the new convent they would educate all classes. His Grace then invited all who appreciated the important work of the Sisters to avail themselves of the opportunity of contributing to the convent fund.

A collection was then taken up by the Ven. Archpriest Walshe, Very Rev. Dean Carew, and the Rev. Father Hickson, assisted by Messrs. Hennesy, Reedy, and Sullivan, the amount realised, with private contributions received by the Rev. Mother, and including a generous donation of £102 from the Ven. Archpriest Walshe, together with the collection at St. Canice's Church on the previous Sunday, made a total of £230.

The Archbishop, the clergy, the school children, and the congregation then went in processional order to the convent, which was solemnly blessed by his Grace. At the conclusion of the ceremony the general public, availing themselves of the invitation of the Rev. Mother, then inspected the building, and all were unanimous in their expressions of praise of the interior, the finished workmanship displayed throughout eliciting general admiration. The Rev. Father Malloy acted as master of ceremonies during the day.

The new convent is an imposing and substantial structure in wood, two storeys high, covering an area of 74 feet square with a frontage to Queen street of 74ft. Entrance from Queen street is gained by a neat porch, which admits to a vestibule 10ft x 10ft. To the right of the vestibule is a splendidly finished reception parlor. Passing along the spacious hall the visitor comes to an ante-room, and passing on through a beautiful Gothic arch the pretty chapel of the community is reached. The chapel is of considerable dimensions, being 33ft x 19ft and 15ft high, and artistically furnished. Plenty of light is obtained by 10 Gothic windows of cathedral glass. The windows of the sanctuary and the sacristy, which face Brougham street, are similar to those of the chapel. The pretty silver sanctuary lamp is an acceptable present from Mrs. Songten, of Westport, the same lady having also given two pairs of silver candlesticks, while a beautifully carved missal stand is

the gift of the Rev. Father Malloy. To the right of the hall, off the downstairs main corridor, is a back parlor; next to which is the refectory. This is a commodious room, 20ft x 15ft, well lighted by 2 large windows. Adjoining the refectory is the kitchen, which is well adapted for all domestic purposes. It is supplied with one of Shacklock's patent ranges, 3ft 6in in dimensions. In the kitchen there is a high-pressure boiler with complete appliances for supplying hot water throughout the building. Leaving the kitchen and proceeding along a passage 38ft long we come to the high schoolroom. This room is in every way admirably adapted for scholastic work, being well lighted by six large windows, and having the advantage of a separate entrance. The two music rooms are situated just off the high schoolroom. Passing on through the hall, the staircase leading to the upstairs portion of the building is reached. The staircase is 4ft wide, with handsome rail, and constructed on the semi-circular plan. On coming to the top floor one notes the corridor, 44ft in length and 5ft 6in in width. On the right of the corridor are two oratories, the first being dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and the one at the other end to the Sacred Heart. Upstairs there are six bedrooms, all large and airy, and an infirmary. Returning along the corridor, we enter the novitiate room, 18ft 10in x 20ft. A conspicuous attraction in this room is a beautifully carved mantelpiece in wood, the work of Robertson Bros., of Nelson. It is an exquisite piece of workmanship, reflecting credit on the firm. Proceeding on, we come to the community room, 21ft x 20ft. This room is well lighted by four large square windows in pleasing design. At the rear of the building upstairs is a cloak room, which adjoins an up-to-date bathroom fitted with all modern conveniences. From the balcony, which is 54ft long and 10ft wide, a most picturesque view of the adjacent native bush and surrounding hills is obtained. To the left of the verandah are a cloak room and bathroom, well fitted up. The building is ventilated throughout with inlet and outlet ventilators. Special care and attention have been devoted to the sanitary arrangements, which are on a most complete scale. A substantial laundry and workroom, situated at the rear of the convent, is now in course of erection, and the building of a corrugated iron fence will shortly be commenced. The contract price of the new convent was about £2000. The architect was the late Mr. Henry Young, of Greymouth, and the contractors Messrs. Hill and Martin, of Westport. The painting and decorative work was executed by Mr. D. O'Neil, and the plumbing by Mr. F. Larsen. Mr. Richard J. Sullivan (late of Reefton), to whom I am greatly indebted for general information relative to the building, was clerk of works. All concerned in the erection of the fine building are to be congratulated on the faithful manner in which they have carried out the various duties entrusted to them.

NOTICE!

Owing to next Wednesday being a public holiday we will have to go to press a day earlier than usual, consequently correspondents' letters should reach us on Monday. Only brief paragraphs will have a chance of insertion if received on Tuesday morning.

In consequence of pressure on our space we have been obliged to hold over several communications and also editorial notes.

WEDDING BELLS

POWER—LYNSKEY.

A very pretty wedding (writes a correspondent) took place at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Kaiapoi, on September 8, when Miss Ellen Lynskey, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Lynskey, of Wilson's Siding, was married to Mr T. Power, eldest son of Mr Thomas Power, Perrin's Ford. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Father Hyland. The bride, who was given away by her father, was attired in a handsome costume of pale green silk, with hat to match. The bridesmaid, Miss Sarah Jane Lynskey, youngest sister of the bride, was becomingly attired in a pretty cream cashmere frock, with large picture hat, and wearing a gold brooch, the present of the bridegroom. The bridegroom was attended by his brother, Mr. J. Power, as groomsman. The presents were numerous and valuable. The bride's travelling costume was of rich brown tweed, with hat to match.

The very worst cough or cold succumb to Tussicura. Obtainable from all chemists and storekeepers.—***

The "EXCELSIOR" STEEL ADJUSTABLE HARROW is one of the most useful implements on a farm: it does the work of all other harrows. Prices—2-leaf to cover, 10ft 6in, £5 10s; 3-leaf to cover, 15ft 6in, £8 MORROW, BASSETT and CO. Send for catalogue.—***