

PRESENTATION TO FATHER COLLINS, LAWRENCE

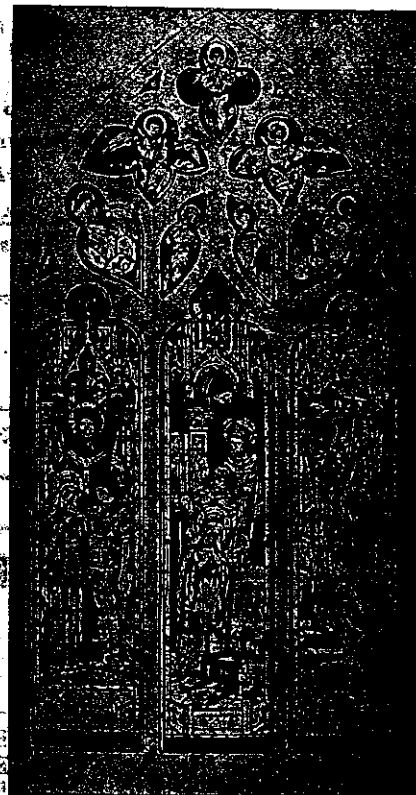
A large gathering of the members of St. Patrick's Church, Lawrence, assembled in the schoolroom on Wednesday evening of last week, to bid farewell and to make a presentation to the Rev. Father Collins, who had recently been appointed to a professorial chair in Holy Cross College, Mosgiel (says the *Tuapeka Times*). The Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary, who presided, in opening the meeting, said it was with mingled feelings of regret and pleasure that he presided over the gathering that evening. He regretted having to part with Father Collins, who had worked with him cordially and zealously for the last two years. It seemed hard to be obliged to say 'good-bye' to a colleague just when he was beginning to know him. He had been compelled to undergo such an ordeal no less than four times during the past six years. It was like having to make a fresh start in life. On the other hand, he was glad to know that Father Collins's removal meant promotion, and he was bound to say that he thought the appointment to a professor's chair in his alma mater, Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, would prove a great blessing to their young friend. It would oblige him not only to revise his past studies, but it would also enable him to mature and expand his knowledge. Any man, whether priest, lawyer, or doctor, must be always studying in order to keep up to date. He was sure he was giving expression to the sentiments not only of those present, but also to the feelings of those who had come into contact with Father Collins, when he wished him every success in his future career. As his teachers declare that he is endowed with more than ordinary talent and ability, they would all look forward with high hopes to his career in the sacred ministry.

Mr. J. J. Woods said he had been deputed by the parishioners of the district to make a presentation to Father Collins as a small token of their appreciation of his labors during the past two years or more, which he hoped would serve as a memento of the very pleasant associations that had existed between him and the members of the congregation. Their young and reverend guest he could well imagine had feelings of regret and sorrow on leaving the people among whom he had performed his first missionary labors, and among whom he had no doubt found many friends and helpers in the good cause which he had made his life's work. This feeling of regret he assured him was reciprocated by the people, but their sorrow was mellowed by the knowledge that he had been honored by promotion to a professorship in Holy Cross College. Father Collins had been blessed by Providence with a strong and robust constitution, and had never spared himself in working his hardest in the scattered district over which his duties called him, and was ever ready, night or day, to respond to the call of duty, and especially so if that duty was the most sacred one of all to the priest—viz., the sick call. Socially, they would all miss him very much. In organising and assisting generally in church and school entertainments and re-unions, he was a host in himself, and was an especial favorite with the school children on account of his bright and cheerful manner and the kindly interest he took in their recreations and spiritual welfare. On behalf of the people of this district, including the good people of Waipori, who had a warm corner in their hearts for Father Collins, he had great pleasure in asking his acceptance of a well-filled purse of sovereigns as a memento of their love and respect for him, and they hoped that under Divine guidance he would be long spared to carry out the sacred duties of his office.

Rev. Father Collins, in responding, said it was hard to bid farewell to those who had proved one's sincere friends. A priest was no exception, for in the course of his duties which brought him into close touch with the family life of his people, with their joys and their sorrows, he was sure to make friendships which made the parting one of regret. Their handsome gift, the kindness he had experienced at their hands during his two years of work amongst them, and the complimentary remarks made that evening made the parting no lighter to bear. During his sojourn in their midst

he had entered into their joys and their sorrows, and he had found in them true friends. He had come to the district with some misgivings, for he had heard something of the scattered nature of the parish; but his predecessor (Father Morkane) had assured him he was coming amongst people who would prove true and sincere friends. His life among them had been very happy. In the first place, it had been his privilege to live with the Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary, and for his kindness, consideration, and advice he would be forever grateful, and he took the opportunity of thanking him before them all for his generosity towards him. He hoped and prayed that the effects of Monsignor's recent illness, which had occasioned them all so much anxiety, would soon pass away, and that he would once more be restored to perfect health. He was badly in need of a holiday, and he hoped that he would take one at no distant date. The Monsignor had remarked on the frequency of the changes in his curates, but he assured him, to use a colloquialism, he had on this occasion the best of the deal, for in his successor he had a young man of exceptional ability and one who would prove a faithful and zealous priest—one who would be beloved by the people. It was said that a priest was always more attached to the people of the parish with which he had been first associated, and he fully realised the truth of this, and he did not think he could ever forget the kindnesses he had received and the many friendships he had made in this parish where he had commenced the work of his sacred calling. He asked them to remember him in their prayers as he would them in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He concluded by again thanking them for their gift and great kindness to him, and said the best favor he would wish them was expressed in the words of the old song—'God be with you till we meet again.'

During the earlier part of the evening songs were contributed by the Rev. Father Collins, Miss Woods, Miss Kelleher, Mr. J. J. Woods, and the Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary, while the Rev. Father O'Connell gave a recitation, 'The exile's return,' which showed the rev. gentleman to be an elocutionist of great ability. Light refreshments were provided by the ladies of the congregation.



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