

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF BARCALDINE CONVENT

After months of organisation by the Rev. Father M. Pyke and parishioners of the Catholic Church in Barcaldine and district, the golden jubilee of the opening of the convent in Barcaldine was celebrated recently.

The Archbishop of Brisbane (Dr Duhig), during the celebration, officially opened a new school building, which had been added to the convent.

To mark the jubilee, it was decided to carry out extensive additions to the premises. The old building had served the purpose for 50 years, and with the growth of the town was found to be out of keeping with modern requirements.

It was on February 3, 1896, that the Sisters of Mercy commenced school in Barcaldine in a two-storey structure with verandahs on front and two sides. Its total length was 68 ft. with a depth of 33 ft. As the years passed the convent building grew. In 1909 a new wing was added to the eastern side, making a spacious oratory and giving extra accommodation on the first floor. In 1912 a 12 ft verandah was added to the back portion; but since then little or nothing has been done. The convent, as it is today, with the improvements carried out recently, extends 122 ft in length and 46 ft in depth. It has a most artistic frontal appearance, designed by the Rev. Father Pyke. A septic system is installed on each floor, and each cell, complete with wardrobe and duchess, contains a set-in basin.

To provide the money for such an undertaking in times of war and drought was a big undertaking but with the unity of the

and drought was a big undertaking, but with the unity of the people connected with the Church the task was accomplished. Such progress proves the faith of Western residents in the stability of this area. Father Pyke and his committees never missed an opportunity to conduct entertainments to provide the money, and although it was a drain on residents' pockets, support for everything was given ungrudgingly.

During the war years, when Range Convent scholars had to leave the coastal areas, accommodation was provided in Barcaldine for them, and what was then the Presbytery was willingly given up by the clergy to house the children. Fortunately the Church owned another property in close proximity and this has remained the residence of Father Pyke and Father Bagley, their original quarters being transformed into a club room, the rendezvous for social functions in connexion with church work.

CIVIC RECEPTION

The Archbishop of Brisbane (Dr Duhig), accepted an invitation to be present to perform the official opening of the new school building.

opening of the new school building. He flew to Longreach last Friday and travelled to Barcaldine by car. Other priests present included Rt. Rev. Monsignor Rowan, of Mackay, and Very Rev. Dean McIlhenny, of Longreach.

The Barcaldine Shire Council tendered the Archbishop a civic reception last Saturday morning, at which there was a wide representation of public interests present.

In the course of his reply to a welcome by several speakers, His Grace said he well remembered the western people's hospitality when he worked among them 40 years ago as Bishop of Rockhampton. He appreciated country life. It was a well-known fact that few poets dealt with city life; they went to the country for their material. He said he got the impression during his travel out that there has been little improvement over the last 40 years in western conditions. The coastal towns have gone up in populations, but not the outback towns. This was disappointing. The northern areas were different, as the military had spent thousands of pounds on roads. The contrast was vivid. Was there a western complex?, he asked. Why put up with existing conditions. An organisation should be established to remedy it. He said he understood they had an organisation called The New Deal for the West, and asked where they were going to get the new deal?

A sadness to him was the poor housing conditions in Western Queensland. He put that down to the high cost of materials and excessive freight. But, he said, the western people were inadequately represented in Parliament. Eighty per cent of the legislators know little or nothing of the condition. The Government should keep in close contact with the west. Until then the country would never develop as it should.

REFORM NECESSARY

"It is time we had a better public spirit, and the position calls for reform," he said. "Westerners depend too much on the south for such things as fruit and vegetables

such things as fruit and vegetables. They can and should grow all they need in the country districts. And they should have abattoirs in the west.

"It is foolish to drive stock under all conditions to the south, and when they do arrive there they are not in the condition they were before starting on the journey."

His Grace also said that there should be trained scientists located in the west to investigate all diseases in stock and land, and give the people advice. Queensland had the assets but did not develop them. It was not right for them to have to put up with the present system. He advocated making all children land-minded; the land was a child's heritage. There was a good future for all on the land. The outlook must be general and not individualistic. He urged them to convert everyone to the west's potentialities, taking care to convert politicians first.

The Jubilee Ball was held last Friday night and was well attended.

Large congregations attended the Sunday services, and also at a solemn High Mass of Thanksgiving at 9.30 on Monday morning.

BLESSING OF CONVENT

The blessing of the convent by Archbishop Duhig last Sunday afternoon was witnessed by a large number of people, including many visitors. On his arrival he walked through a guard of honour formed by the pupils of the school, and also by Hibernians. After the ceremony of blessing the building, Rev. Father M. Pyke extended a welcome to His Grace and all present.

Mr C. F. Lloyd-Jones, chairman of the Barcaldine Shire Council, also welcomed the Archbishop on behalf of the townspeople. Mr Lloyd-Jones spoke in high praise of Rev. Pyke's successful efforts to provide comfort for the Sisters of Mercy and pupils of the Convent School.

His Grace, who was received with applause, said it gave him very great pleasure to be with them on such an important occasion. He extolled the Sisters for

them on such an important occasion'. He extolled the Sisters for their good work, and said he knew and appreciated what they had done. He also spoke of the splendid service Father Pyke had given to the parish. He said that Father Pyke had launched the appeal for funds to bring about the erection of the structure with confidence, in addition, the architectural design, admired by all, was planned by him. He further said that he was so taken up with the design that he felt sure that if Father Pyke had not joined the Church he would have followed architecture there would have been Pyke houses, bridges, &c., all over Queensland.

Father Pyke gave details of the expenditure, which showed the splendid response to the appeal. During the afternoon a collection was taken up and with subscriptions received from outside centres an amount of about £700 was announced.

After afternoon tea, served by a ladies committee on the lawn, those present were invited to inspect the inside of the building. All agreed the convent as it is now, would do credit to much larger towns than Barcaldine.

Members of the clergy present were: His Grace, Archbishop Duhig (Brisbane), Rt Rev Monsignor Rowan (Mackay), Very Rev. Dean McIlhenny (Longreach), Rev. Father Lyons (CSSR), Rev. Father Dobson (CSSR), Rev. Father Dunphy (CSSR), Rev. Father Pyke, Rev. Father D. O'Meara (Hughenden), Rev. Father R. Lyons Childers), Rev. Father M. O'Connell (Alpha), Rev. Father T. Murphy (Rockhampton), Rev. Father K. Bagley (Barcaldine), Rev. Father V. Ashwood (Kolyo), and Rev. Father M. Greene (Longreach).