VALEDICTORY AT CESSOCK.

PRESENTATION TO MR. J. M'DONALD.

(From our Representative).

Councillor M'Donald, who will shortly sever his connection with the Cessnock Shire Council, owing to his projected departure for Queensland, was entertained by his fellow councillors and other friends at Ansteys Hotel, yesterday, and was made the recipient of a presentation.

The President of the Cessnock Shire Council, Councillor Morgan, who presided, proposed the toast of "Our Guest." He had been closely associated with Councillor M'Donald for some time, and had found him one of the best tempered men he ever met. They noted differences on the council table, but when they got outside everything was forgotten. Councillor M'Donald had always been a fighter for the cider he represented, and the people could thank him for the progress made in the way of road making. While looking after his own riding, he always took up a fair and just attitude towards the other sides. He very much regretted his departure from the council, and trusted that he would have a happy and prosperous future. The toast was received with enthusiasm to the strains of "He's a jolly Good Fellow.

Councillor Morgan then presented Councillor M'Donald, on behalf of his fellow councillors and other friends, with a valuable motor outfit as a token of regard. Councillor M'Namara said he, perhaps, had more reason to be sorry at Councillor M'Donald's departure than any other, because their guest had been his colleague in the riding. He was quite sure they would never get a better representative of A Riding, and if they got one as good he would be satisfied. They were losing a real country squire and a gentleman, and his departure was a loss to all.

Councillor Edwards expressed regret at their guest's departure. Councillor M'Donald had always acted as a gentleman in the council and out of it. He had studied the interests of all concerned, and it was difficult to get men who would do that. He not only worked for A Riding, but for the shire generally. He wished him every success in the future.

Councillor Baille said there was no more conscientious man than was Councillor M'Donald. In the State to which he was going he believed more public men were required, and he hoped Councillor M'Donald would follow the same course that he had done here.

Mr. George Brown, J.P., said Councillor M'Donald was worthy of all the praise they could bestow upon him. He had known him since he was a boy, and his actions had been such that no one could truthfully say a word against him. He had a large influence with Councillor M'Donald while in the council, Councillor M'Donald was for all time to come...
POKOLBIN.

Mr. J. M. Macdonald's well-known Ben Ean vineyards and distillery has changed hands at a very satisfactory figure, the purchaser being Lindeman, Ltd., of Sydney. Mr. Macdonald intends following pastoral pursuits in Queensland. He occupied a prominent position in this district for many years, and his place will be difficult to fill.

He identified himself with every movement making for progress. He was a councillor of a riding in Cessnock Shire since local government was introduced, and a supporter of sport, but would have it riddled of its objectionable features. A keen student of viticulture, employing first-class methods, and a believer in intense cultivation, his vineyards were always a standing object lesson to others engaged in the same industry. Mrs. Macdonald acted as organist at the local Methodist Church, was also an active church worker, and a short time ago was presented with a handsome piece of plate in recognition of her many services.

The prospects of the coming vintage are very fair, but a fall of rain now is much needed. The demand for the wines of this district during the last few years has been most encouraging. The growers find it difficult to keep pace with their enquiries, consequently prices have been raised. This is a happy contrast to the state the industry was in a short time back. The prime cause of this change is the fact that the wines, both claret and hock, have won their way on to the London market, so that now if the output were doubled, it is safe to say it would be all eagerly sought after.

Another contributing cause was the passage of Commonwealth Excise Act, giving a great lift to Australian brandy. Previous to the enactment of this measure Australia was the dumping ground for the inferior brandies of Europe. Any spirit of any age, grape, sugar, or potato, up to that time was admitted into the Commonwealth, and could be sold as brandy. Now brandy must be produced from pure grapes, so it may be easily seen the impetus thus given to local wines. In this way, vintages of wet seasons, which would not be classed as fine wines are turned into excellent brandies. If labour were not so aggressive wine growing would assume very large proportions in this locality.

Messrs. Lindeman are erecting another wing to their already spacious cellars.

Dec. 27.