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knew how to handle it, what to do with it. I just wish we had more of his voice, of his singing, to hear him. I don't know what more I could tell you about Dad. He gave up the store, and he wasn't able to sing. He went 3 years and never sang a note. Gave it up completely. He was heart? broken. The church choir at that time was his life, and teaching was his life. And in 19--I'd say it'd be '52, '51, when--he didn't give up the church choir at Sacred Heart Church, they gave him up. I don't know whether they found him hard, if he was getting cranky, or why. We never knew the reason. They never ever gave him a reason. The strangest thing. After 25 years, he got a letter in the mail. The letter said, "Your service is no longer required." And we couldn't believe it. People couldn't give us--he was never told why they decided they didn't want him. A man that had the choirs--if you could have heard them--the production. And the boys' choir, they never had it since, after that. (For 25 years?) 25 years at Sacred Heart Church. And he.... It's strange--funny thing about that. The letter was mailed to him. And he came home, and it fell behind the radiator in the hall. And he forgot the letter. So the letter came, we'll say, on Monday. He went to choir practice with the boys in the afternoon. He went with the women on Tuesday night, I think it was. Wednesday he had the men's practice, he was there. He had the boys again on Thursday. And one of the priests or someone asked someone from the choir, "What's going on downstairs?" "Choir practice." He said, "Oh? Who's down there?" "Mr. Ballah." The guy never told the fellow anything. He just said, "Oh." They let him go for a whole week. Two weeks. And he walked in after mass one morning to see the priest. He said, "What are you doing, still hanging around?" They let him sing mass for a week and never said a word to him. He said, "Well, where do you want me to be?" He told him, "Didn't you get our letter?" And that's how cold it was. He never forgot that. It really hurt him. Now, his health was starting to go down then. But we couldn't see any deterioration in the quality of the music. The choir then was as big as ever. And still in full volume. But there must have been some faction there that we didn't know about, you know. I don't know what it was. The Sisters were strong then. They didn't interfere; it wasn't the Sisters. I don't know. No one ever explained whatever happened. It hurt him so much that he completely gave up--he gave up his teaching. He stopped, within a month, he wasn't teaching any pupils. And he had, then, a batch of pupils, of maybe 30, 40, 50 pupils--he had quite a few. 'Cause they were coming all after-noon and even-ings. Our house wasn't our own when he was teaching, 'cause he took the front room over. And he gave that up. And he gave up--never sang. We used to beg him to sing. Because he was singing so rich then. Wouldn't sing a note. And one day we made a record, and we were sending it to my sister in Guelph--Cecelia. I think I have it there. Pretty scratchy. I think I have it. And we begged him to sing on it. "Just sing for Cece? lia." And he sang. And it was the first words he sang in 3 years. (So then after that, there was no more boys' choir?) No. Not in Sydney. They tried to keep it for a few, couple of years. A lot of old friends in Sydney--Fr. Frank Abbass, Fr. Ora MacManus--all have fond memories of M. J. Ballah and the Lyceum. Oh, so



many people you talk to in that age group, any? way, if they sang at all and were a Catholic, they'd remember the boy choir. You learned a lot, you know. Just learning to read music. Some people followed after that, had HIGHLAND OFFICE PRODUCTS _,- _ YOUR COMPLETE Canon BUSINESS MACHINE DEALER SALES * SERVICE * LEASING Canon PLAIN RARER COWERS 4000 SERIES • Dual Colour • Image Editor • Semi-Automatic Document Feeder • 40 Copies a Minute • Duplexing Canon R, Halftone Reproduction ifgl • Confidential " Messages • 16 Shades of Grey • Speed Dialing • High Speed Transmission Canon • State-of-the-Art I Electronic Typewriter • 700-Character Correction Memory • "UNDO" Key • 8-Line Back-lit Liquid Crystal Display ' Highland Office Products Reeves Building Call Today For 22 Maple Street A Demonstration ItT'- 539-2677 Sen/ing All of C'x Brston with Quality Business Mactiines