

to 262 votes, a Bill organising public powers, which implies the recognition of the Republic. President Macmahon nominates the Councillors of state; and M. Buffet, President of the Assembly, is forming a Cabinet. A note in an official journal declares that Macmahon is resolved to uphold conservative principles.

BURNING OF THE NEW ZEALAND IMMIGRANT SHIP COSPATRICK.

The San Francisco mail steamer Cyphrenes which arrived at Auckland on Monday, brought papers containing full accounts of the terrible catastrophe which occurred on the 17th November last, when the fine ship Cospatrick, with some hundreds of immigrants on board, bound for Auckland, was burnt at sea. The following telegraphic account of the disaster was published by the daily papers on the arrival of the mail steamer:—

The following is a copy of the deposition of Henry Macdonald, before the Receiver of Wrecks:—He was second mate of the ship Cospatrick. The vessel was supplied with a fixed fire engine on the fore-castle head, with suction pump up and down, steam movable fire engine with rubber suction hose, and also a considerable quantity of delivery box engines. They were in good order, and were employed in the endeavour to put out the fire, and threw large quantities of water. The vessel was well supplied with fire buckets, with lanyards attached. The vessel proceeded on her voyage, and met with fine weather and light winds. Two births occurred at 10 p.m. on the 17th November. During the voyage the master's hat blew overboard, and the port boat was instantly lowered to pick it up, and returned to the vessel in a very short time. On Tuesday, 17th November, 1874, at noon, the vessel was in lat. 37.14 S. At 12.25, the weather was fine, with the wind blowing a light breeze. The deponent had charge of the first watch, and was relieved at midnight by the chief officer. The vessel was barely steering. About a quarter of an hour before midnight deponent went carefully round the upper deck, over the poop and fore-castle. All was well, and there was no smell of fire or any other matter to attract attention. Deponent had been below about three-quarters of an hour when he was aroused by a cry of fire. He jumped out of his berth and rushed on deck undressed. He met the master at the cuddy door in his shirt. The master ordered deponent forward to enquire the cause of the alarm. Deponent rushed forward and saw a dense smoke coming up from the fore-cabin. The chief officer was getting the fire-engine to work, and the passengers and crew were all rushing on deck. The cry was that the fire was coming up from about the boatswain's locker. Deponent returned and assisted the master to endeavour to get the ship about, but she had no steerage way. In a few minutes flames came up the fore-castle, and the foresail was hauled up. The vessel now came up head to wind, which drove the smoke aft, the flames bursting up the fore-hatchway. The master sent for deponent, and asked if it was possible to get volunteers to see where the fire was. It was impossible, as the smoke was suffocating, and deponent asked the master if he should put the boats out, and the master said, "No, but do what you can to put the fire out." The foremast boats by this time caught fire, and the flames were now coming up the main hatchway. Deponent sent men to clear away the boats on the sides. The starboard quarter boat was now lowered, and about 80—mostly women—put in. The davits bent with their weight, and as the boat touched the water, she turned over, and the people were all drowned. Hencoops and other moveables were thrown over, but it was of no avail to save their lives. He now stationed two men at the port boat to prevent anyone lowering it except by the master's order. The officers now made an attempt to get the long boat overboard, but there was too much confusion to get proper help. Her bows caught fire and she was abandoned, and there was a rush for the port life-boat, which was lowered, and about 30 or 40 people got into her. Deponent slid down and got on board by the fore tackle. The boat was kept clear of the ship. The chief mate and a female jumped overboard and were picked up. By the time the boat got to the rear of the ship the mainmast fell overboard. Shortly afterwards the stern blew out, then the mizzen mast fell. After first speaking to the master, deponent got the signal ammunition thrown overboard. At daylight the starboard life-boat was found full of people. Deponent heard shouts from the officer to take charge of her. He got alongside and took charge. Thomas Lewis, A.B., Edward Cotter, O.S., and Bently, an emigrant, also got into the boat with deponent. The gear of the remaining boats was divided between them, deponent's boat getting one oar and a broken one. The two boats kept company, hovering round the burning ship the whole day, until the afternoon of the 18th, when the ship sank. There were 30 people in deponent's boat. Deponent then kept to the north-east for the Cape of Good Hope, as did the other boat. The boats kept company all the 20th and 21st of November. When it commenced to blow they separated. They were without provisions or water, mast or sail, and had but an oar and a half. The wind was southerly, and by taking one of the footlines they managed to rig a sail with the girl's petticoats, and so keep the boat in her course. One boat contained Baker, the emigrants' cook; the three A.B.'s, one ordinary seaman, and twenty-three passengers, with deponent—in all making thirty people. The other boat contained the chief mate, with four A.B.'s, an ordinary seaman, the butchers, and six passengers, including one baby aged eleven days. The people rapidly sank from want of food and water. By the 25th they were reduced to eight in number, and three of these were out of their mind. On the 26th, before daylight, a barque passed, which they hailed, but were unseen. On Friday, the 27th, they were picked up by the ship British Sceptre, of Liverpool, and the five people then remaining alive were received on board and treated with every kindness. Two, however, Robert Hampton and one passenger, died

before they reached St. Helena, leaving deponent, Thomas Lewis, and Edward Cotter. So far, he knew only three survivors. Deponent considers all the gear was regularly kept in the boat, and must have got thrown out in the confusion. The oils used for the side lights, for the lights in the cuddy, were kept in the port quarter galley. The crew, including deponent, had lucifers, which they used to light their pipes and lamps with, when necessary. The boatswain was the only person having access to the boatswain's locker, of which he kept the key. Nothing was kept there but the stores already enumerated, and deponent does not know whether the boatswain had been there that day. There was one ordinary seaman told off to go into the coal hole every day to fill baskets, which were hoisted by the emigrants. No other person was allowed to go into the coal hole, and deponent, who used frequently to talk to him about the coals, heard no remark as to their heating or smell. He did not know how the fire originated. Signed, Henry M'Donald.

Rowan Lewis, quarter-master, gave corroborative evidence, and said the boat in which he escaped remained two days by the burning vessel. They were much exhausted from thirst, and having no water or provisions, rapidly sank. He could not account for the fire.

Edward Cotter deposed that when the ship caught fire, the emigrants formed a line and passed water along. The emigrants got tin dishes, and everything that could hold water, but the fire burned very fast. When the deck-house caught fire they were panic stricken, and ran away, the smoke stifling them. When lowering the boats people were sliding down and falling into the water. In the boat after leaving the ship, all they did was to load each other a hand about. In the boat there was not much talk. The biggest, fattest, and healthiest-looking went off first. It was not from them that blood was obtained, but from other men. Witness only ate twice; he drank whenever a vein was opened, and felt better the last two days in the boat than before then. His great thought was of being picked up. It was cold during night, but very hot in the day. They had escaped with barely clothes to cover them.

The 'Evening Star's' Auckland correspondent furnishes the following additional particulars:—

Tremendous excitement was caused in London by the Cospatrick news. Telegrams were received some time before the arrival of the steamer Nyanza with the survivors; and when that vessel was due at Plymouth, the London journals despatched special reporters to await her arrival. These chartered special steamers, and endeavored to board the steamer before the Customs officer and secure a monopoly of the news. Mr Forbes, 'Daily News' reporter, who was the first man in Paris after the siege, succeeded in first boarding the Nyanza; and when the others got aboard, it was found that Mr Forbes had disappeared with the survivors. When the latter turned up again, it was found that he had entered into a contract with them, giving the mate £100 and the two seamen £25 each for a monopoly of their statements for the 'Daily News.' The sailors sold the St. Helena papers, with a brief account at from £5 to £16 per copy. The 'Standard's' special offered Cotter, one of the survivors, £100 to act on behalf of his journal, but the 'Telegraph' held him to his agreement. Lewis, a weather-beaten sailor, was the salvation of the party in the boat by his indomitable energy. He divided into nine portions the dreadful food which sustained them. Cotter was some time ago in the coasting trade of New Zealand, and was working his way out again. He was six months on the Jane Anderson, at Port Chalmers, then on the steamer Paterson, and afterwards worked ashore for McKenzie Bros. on the Port Chalmers and Oamaru Railway. Shaw, Savill's office from Thursday to Monday lay unopened, owing to the Christmas holidays. The 'Star's' correspondent considers that Captain Elmslie's coolness was affected through his having his wife and family aboard. He was so agitated that he allowed some boats to burn before his eyes, and made no attempt to provision others. Since this catastrophe, attention has been paid to the Tintern Abbey, bound to Canterbury, of which the 'Times' says if anything happened to her not half the passengers could be saved.

WELLINGTON.

March 4th, 1875.

In my last letter to you I stated that four clergymen were expected from home, and now I am in a position to inform you that they have arrived, and are stationed as under:—Father Mahoney in Nelson, to replace Father Bensfield; Father Carew in Napier, to replace Father Guetenoire; Father Kirk at Wanganni, to replace Father Tresallet, who is going to Sidney. Father McCaughey, who has been at the Hutt for some back, is on a visit to Christchurch for the good of his health. Father Yarden is in Wellington as Vicar-General, as Father Forrest has gone back again to Napier. Father Kearney, who was expected to have gone to Nelson, has been kept in Wellington, and no clergyman has been sent as yet to assist Father O'Reilly. His Lordship has been visiting his Diocese almost since his arrival; he goes south to-day to Christchurch. Some very valuable property has been lately purchased by the Church, including a very valuable allotment in the District Te Aro for the Convent School, and a section adjoining the Cathedral at the east side as the site of a residence for His Lordship, each of which cost exactly £900.

Captain Sharp and Mrs Sharp are going on a tour to the old land, and are taking passage via San Francisco by the next boat. I understand Mrs. Sharp is to be presented with an address and presentation before she leaves, and I have no doubt, judging from the committee who have taken it in hand, that it will not be unworthy of her. Mrs. Sharp is so well known that it would be out of place for me to refer to any of her services to the Catholics of Wellington, and particularly of Te Aro. On her arrival in Dublin she is to send some valuable prizes out to St. Joseph's School, to be competed for next Christmas.