

SPEAKING at Woolston, Mr. Laurensen, the successful candidate for Lyttelton, said that while interested in a certain boys' club at Lyttelton he had asked the boys to choose by ballot which of a number of prominent men they would like to be. The result of the polling showed that J. L. Sullivan, pugilist, received about five times as many votes as any of the others, although such men as Gladstone were included.

A MEETING of upwards of 200 shareholders of the J. G. Ward Farmers' Association was held at Invercargill on Saturday, when Mr. Ward made proposals for the repayment to old shareholders of the amount they had been called upon to pay on their shares in consequence of liquidation. He stated that on the date the liquidator took charge—namely, June 23, 1896—the total net indebtedness of the association to their bankers under all heads, including debentures, amounted to £78,363, and the total receipts up to June 30 last, as filed by the liquidator with the registrar, were £71,657; so it was clearly demonstrated upon these results that the statement originally made by him, and which he always maintained, that the business never should have been liquidated, was more than borne out, and they had still further collections to make. He read letters from English firms confirming payments made by him to them. At the conclusion of the meeting the shareholders unanimously resolved to support Mr. Ward in re-forming the Ward Farmers' Company, and the following resolution was carried unanimously:—That Mr. Ward be accorded cordial thanks for the lucid and able explanation of the affairs of the association, the mover remarking that they were all deeply indebted to him for the information given and for the offer. It was unanimously resolved:—That it is with pleasure we learn that the business of the Ward Farmers' Association is to be revived, and that we will do all we can to promote their interests.

A WRITER in the *Hawke's Bay Herald* accounts as follows for the defeat of Mr. McLean and the election of Mr. Fraser for the local electorate: 'The real cause [of the defeat of the Opposition candidate, Mr. McLean], frequently mentioned in conversation, though I have not yet seen it in print, was the strange conduct of the Chairman of the Education Board a few months ago in reference to the Catholic school question. It will be remembered that Dr. Sidey then objected to have Mr. Hill examine the Catholic schools of this district; that he objected to the Education Board giving the Catholic children their 'class passes,' to which, in Mr. Hill's good judgment and scholarly abilities, they had a strict right, and 'to add insult to injury,' as we say, Dr. Sidey drawing on his fossilised and ill-advised ideas of 100 years ago thought fit to call the Catholic religion 'a hybrid religion.' Such conduct in this enlightened age with current facts before our eyes, was a gross insult to every Catholic in this province, and one considering how Catholics have been treated since the passing of the present Education Act, which required retributive punishment, the Catholics of the district, aware that the views of Mr. R. D. D. McLean in religious matters, amongst which I class the education question, were usually those of Dr. Sidey and Mr. P. S. McLean, took the first opportunity. Who can blame them? It is a question of self-defence, and one of paramount importance for them. Perhaps the fact was overlooked that the Catholic vote in this constituency is over 1000 strong, not an easy matter for rather a weak candidate to ignore. This question might be developed a little further, but the above may be read between the lines, and suffices to account for the result of the late election.'

INTERCOLONIAL.

During the absence of the Rev. Father Walsh, the Rev. Father Fitzpatrick will act as administrator of St. Francis' parish, Haymarket.

An anonymous Protestant gentleman of Sydney some time ago presented the Cardinal with a painting of great value by a famous Dutch artist.

At a distinguished gathering of the citizens of West Melbourne an address and purse of sovereigns was presented to the Rev. Denis Murphy previous to his departure for Ireland.

Mr. Herbert Wardell has been appointed by Cardinal Moran to succeed his father, the late Mr. W. W. Wardell, as architect of St. Mary's,—a graceful tribute to his father's memory, as well as to Mr. Wardell's capacity.

The Rev. Father M. P. Malone, of the Sacred Heart Church, and for over seven years chaplain to St. Vincent's Hospital and Convent, Sydney, has, owing to ill health, been granted 12 months' leave of absence. He intends to visit Ireland.

On the evening of November 28 St. Mary's schoolroom, North Melbourne, was crowded by the parishioners and friends of the Rev. Denis Murphy, who assembled to witness the presentation of an address and a purse of sovereigns to the rev. gentleman previous to his departure for Ireland.

The death is reported of the Rev. Father O'Callaghan of the archdiocese of Hobart, which took place on the 4th inst. The deceased was born in 1832 at Ballyclough, County Cork, and pursued his studies at All Hallows College, being ordained in St. Joseph's Cathedral, Hobart, in 1854. After over 40 years of missionary labours Father O'Callaghan went on a holiday trip to Melbourne a few weeks ago and while there contracted influenza, the attack proving fatal. The venerable Archbishop Murphy expressed a desire that the remains should be taken to Tasmania for interment, but his Grace waived his desire in deference to the wish of the brother of the deceased. The obsequies were celebrated in St. Francis's Church, Melbourne, his Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne presiding.

Sister Mary Cecilia Lee died at the Convent of Mercy, Kyneton, recently. The deceased Sister, who was about 43 years of age at the time of her death, was a native of the West of Ireland. After coming to Victoria she entered the Geelong Convent, where she made her profession 19 years ago, and had been at the Kyneton Convent for the past five or six years.

On Sunday, December 5, his Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne blessed and re-opened St. Ambrose's Church, Brunswick. The sermon was delivered by the Very Rev. Father O'Farrell. The church, with its handsome additions, which have been carried out at a cost of £6000, forms a conspicuous landmark of this important suburb. The building is unquestionably the finest church in the district, and compares favourably with the parish churches of the archdiocese of Melbourne.

On Wednesday, November 29, at the Good Samaritan Convent, Pitt street, Sydney, Mother Mary Genevieve (Miss Helena Ennis), who has held the office of Mother-assistant for the past 22 years, passed away at the age of 78 years, and 37 of her religious life. The deceased nun was a daughter of Mr. Ennis, of Meath, Ireland, and a niece of Mr. Ryan Brennan, of 'Garryowen,' Limerick, Ireland. She was born in County Meath in 1821, and entered the Convent of the Good Samaritan on October 1, 1862. Mother Mary Genevieve was beloved by all who had the happiness of knowing her.

Mr. John Dunn, who is said to be the oldest Australian native in the colonies, died in the Castlemaine Benevolent Asylum recently. Deceased, who was born in Sydney in 1799, was present at the A.N.A. banquet when the annual conference was held in 1897, when he was accorded a great ovation. The old man thought so much of the honour paid him on that occasion that in his belongings was found a menu card of the banquet wrapped up in several sheets of paper, and enclosed in a leather pouch he had specially made for the purpose, and yet the A.N.A. (says the *Catholic Press*) allowed him to die in the poor-house. Another instance of our reverence for old age.

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

THE position in South Africa during the past week has become grave, but there is nothing to be alarmed about. The Boers are occupying certain strategic points which they will not vacate until driven out of them. As there is no likelihood of an advance on their part, matters will remain as they are until the British commanders find they have sufficient forces at hand to drive the enemy back.

The British column for the relief of Kimberley met with a serious reverse in the early part of last week. Early on Monday morning Lord Methuen's forces, with six howitzers, enfiladed the enemy's trenches at Magersfontein, near Spytfontein, on the western frontier. General Cronje commanded the enemy. The Highland Brigade attacked at daybreak the south end of the kopje occupied by the enemy. The British troops held their ground until dusk, the position extending six miles. The fight continued all next day, and on Tuesday evening the British force had to retire to the Modder River, the enemy occupying their entrenchments. The London newspapers described Lord Methuen's repulse as the most serious of the war. The Highlanders suffered very severely. Two hundred of them were mowed down in attempting to drive the enemy from their entrenchments. The Black Watch on reforming after the terrible onslaught mustered only 160 men. The total of the British loss throughout the engagement was 833 killed and wounded, including 703 officers and men belonging to the Highland Brigade, and of this latter number 69 were officers. The Boer losses were estimated in killed and wounded at 2000 men. Major-General Wauchope was shot close to the Boer trenches.

It is estimated that General Cronje's force has now reached 20,000.

General Buller met with a serious reverse at Chieveley, between Estcourt and Colenso, on Friday last. He moved with his full strength to Chieveley early on Friday morning, intending to force the passage of the river. Finding that it was impossible to carry out his intention he was compelled to withdraw, but not until some of the brigades suffered dreadfully. Ten guns were abandoned, and out of 12,000 troops engaged it is reported that 82 were killed, 337 are missing, and 667 were wounded, including Lieutenant-colonel Long and the Hon. F. Roberts, son of Lord Roberts, who were both dangerously injured, and 37 other officers. Out of 37 officers wounded at Chieveley 26 of them are seriously hurt. Lord Roberts' son has since succumbed to his wounds.

According to the *Times*, Sir Charles Warren replaces Lord Methuen in charge of the Kimberley relief column, while Major-General Tucker succeeds General Gatacre in command of the column near Stormberg.

To show that the Home authorities realise the gravity of the situation, Lord Roberts has been appointed Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, with Lord Kitchener as Chief of Staff. They have also summoned the remainder of the reserves. The despatch of the 7th division is forthwith ordered. Cavalry and artillery reinforcements will be prepared forthwith, including a howitzer brigade. They further authorise General Buller to raise local mounted corp., and will allow 12 militia battalions to volunteer for service outside the kingdom, and embody an equivalent militia for home service. A strong force of yeomanry volunteers for service will be enrolled. They have decided to accept the offers of the colonies of further troops, especially of mounted contingents.

The official report of the total British casualties to date gives the following figures:—Killed, 728; wounded, 2784; prisoners, 2265.