

Heavy Loss of the Seventh Contingent.

On Friday came the disquieting news from South Africa that the seventh contingent had met with very heavy losses in an engagement at Vrede-Bothasberg. It appears that the Boers to the number of 700 men attempted to cross Colonel Byng's and Rimington's line. The brunt of the fighting fell on Colonel Garratt's New Zealanders, who, by superb valor, defeated the attempt, but lost two officers and 18 men, five officers and 33 men being wounded. The Boers abandoned 100 horses and 6000 cattle.

The Boers at first goaded a herd of cattle into a gallop, but the New Zealanders shot 70 of them, which had the effect of checking the rest. From behind the cover of the dead cattle and horses the Boers maintained a heavy fire till they were repulsed. Only a few escaped.

The Premier received the following cablegram from Colonel Porter, commanding the seventh contingent, forwarded by Major Pilcher from Capetown:—'The regiment on duty has reported a severe engagement, with heavy loss to the New Zealand Seventh Contingent, at midnight on the 23rd February. Upwards of 800 Boers, under H. Botha, Ross, and Albert, broke through, driving the cordon line of outposts at a point held by 100 on the left wing. Under cover of 1000 cattle, the enemy rushed the position in overwhelming force, proving both irresistible and bold. Our men in the shelter of the trenches bravely and gallantly resisted the onslaught, as is evidenced by the fact of 51 casualties, all in the trenches. The killed were 24, and the wounded 27. There were many instances of heroism, and not one sulker is reported. All fully maintained the bravery and reputation of the New Zealand soldiers, and that is the only solatium I can offer the relatives. Particulars of the casualties will come later.'

It is needless to say that this message was the cause of great anxiety to the relatives and friends of the members of the contingent, the suspense being only relieved by the issue of the morning papers containing a list of the killed and wounded. Immediately the news of the disaster was received flags were hoisted at half-mast on the principal buildings in the cities and towns of the Colony.

The following is a list of the casualties:—

Killed.—Lieutenant Harold, Lieutenant Dickenson, Lieutenant William Forsythe, Sergeant Arthur Noonan, Farrier-sergeant Owen Turner, Corporal Alfred Firth, Corporal Albert Russell, Lance-corporal William Riddick, Lance-corporal Dungan, Lance-corporal Anderson, Lance-corporal Percy, Lance-corporal Nation, Farrier Leonard, Farrier Retter, Private David Bruce, Private John Ashmore, Private John Conniban, Private William Dunlop, Private Peter Fletcher, Private Harry Finch, Private William Monaghan, Private Thomas McLew, Private Alexander Scott, Private Walter Stevenson, Private Herbert Timmos, Private Alfred Whitney, Private Lytton Diteby.

Dangerously wounded.—Lieutenants James College and Stapleton Coulton, Sergeant Walter Tiller, Private William Hill Bennett.

Severely wounded.—Lieutenants Charles Phair, William H. Wilson, and Dennis Hickey, Sergeants Kenneth Malcolm, Charles Minifie, and James Conn, Corporals Andrew Houston, Thomas Legg, and J. C. Gilmore, Lance-corporal Edward Wylde, Privates John Buchanan, Thomas Frame, Maurice Fitzgerald, George Fookes, Robert Hardie, Charles Dunford, James C. McLellan, William C. McDonald, John Isbister, David M'Diarmid, Albert Rosinorski, Frederick M. Rogers, and Albert Sands.

Slightly wounded.—Squadron Sergeant-major Pat Cottone, Corporal M. Carr, Farrier-corporal M. Ross, Privates George Armstrong, William Boon, William H. Cook, Gordon Reynolds, James P. Skitt, and Roland Westropp.

Trooper Fletcher, who was killed, was a Catholic and son of Mr. W. Fletcher, Lake Wakatipu. Lieutenant D. Hickey, who was reported to be severely wounded, is also a Catholic, and was well known in Dunedin. His father, Mr. J. D. Hickey, resides in Cork.

At High Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday the Rev. Father Murphy, Adm., made a touching reference to the recent disaster to the Seventh New Zealanders, and asked for the prayers of the congregation for Trooper Fletcher, of Mornington, and the several other Catholic New Zealanders who were killed on that occasion. He paid a tribute to the bravery which the men had displayed. The Dead March in 'Saul' was played by the organist as the congregation left the cathedral.

In the Pro-Cathedral at half-past 7 this (Monday) morning (writes our Christchurch correspondent) a Requiem Mass was offered for those who fell in the recent severe engagement in South Africa. His Lordship the Bishop was celebrant. As a preface to his sermon at Vespers on the previous evening the Right Rev. Dr. Grimes made feeling reference to the disaster to the New Zealand troops, and read a telegram from the Premier referring to the state of the wounded. The Bishop expressed his heartfelt sympathy with the afflicted relatives of the fallen troopers, and asked the prayers of the congregation for the eternal rest of the departed.

At the 11 o'clock Mass at St. Patrick's Basilica, South Dunedin, on Sunday, the Rev. Father Coffey, during his discourse, made some very touching references to the members of the Seventh Contingent who recently met their deaths in South Africa. At the conclusion of the service the Dead March was played, the congregation standing meanwhile. About 50 members of the Ninth Contingent were present.

Messrs Dwan Brothers, the well-known hotel brokers, land and financial agents, Wellington, have a number of first-class hotels in the North and South Islands to sell or lease. This progressive firm has a very large connection, and is in a position to give the best of advice and financial assistance to purchasers of hotel properties...

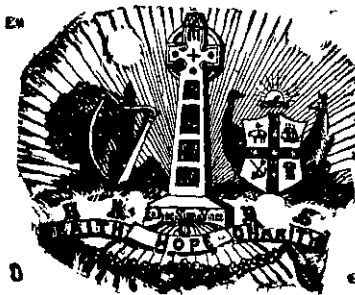
The Dominican Nuns in South Africa.

THE first convent schools founded in Capetown (writes the special correspondent in South Africa of the *Freeman's Journal*) were those of the Dominican nuns, though convent schools had previously been established in Graham's Town, in the Eastern District, by the Sisters of the Assumption many years before. The devoted Sisters of St. Dominic arrived in Cape Colony in 1863, and immediately took up the great works of Catholic education and philanthropy which have made the name of the Sisters of St. Dominic famous throughout the world, and a household word throughout South Africa. It is on the site of the old 'Wachtenburg Garden'—originally purchased by his Lordship Dr. Griffith for Church purposes—that the good Sisters established themselves nearly 40 years ago, and from thence ramifications of the Order have extended throughout the length and breadth of the country.

In Capetown the nuns have several scholastic establishments—St. Mary's Convent day school, a private high school where young ladies are taught, in addition to the ordinary school curriculum, the higher branches of learning, and where those who wish it are prepared for the University examinations. The Sisters also have charge of St. Bridget's Mission schools, which are the ordinary parochial schools for girls. These are under Government supervision, and the Sisters receive an annual grant from the Education Department, as is the case with the boys' schools under the care of the Marist Brothers. In addition to these educational establishments, the Dominicans have in Capetown an institution for the education of deaf mutes—one similar to their famous place at Waratah in N.S.W. This charitable institution was founded in 1874, and is the first of its kind established in South Africa. A number of stricken inmates are continually being educated in this noble institution by the devoted Sisters of St. Dominic. In addition to the schools above-mentioned, the Sisters have high schools at Somerset road (Sacred Heart), Wynberg (St. Mary's), Woodlands, and other centres, and private day and Government-aided schools in many parishes throughout the Western Vicariate.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

THE Rev. Father Cleary leaves for his trip to Europe on next Monday morning, going by the express to the Bluff. Correspondents are notified that all letters addressed to him by name will be treated as his private correspondence and will be forwarded to his Home address. All communications intended for publication should be addressed to 'The Editor,' and not by name to any member of the staff. A competent staff of writers will be engaged on the paper during the Rev. Father Cleary's absence, and arrangements have been made for a supply of editorial and other articles from his pen till his return.



HIBERNIAN-AUSTRALASIAN CATHOLIC BENEFIT SOCIETY, NEW ZEALAND DISTRICT, No. 3.

The Catholic Community is earnestly requested to support this excellent Organisation, for it inculcates a love of Holy Faith and Patriotism in addition to the unsurpassed benefits and privileges of Membership.

The Entrance Fees are from 5s to £1, according to age at time of Admission.

Sick Benefits 20s per week for 26 weeks, 15s per week for the next 13 weeks, and 10s a week for the following 13 weeks. In case of a further continuance of his illness a member of Seven Years' Standing previous to the commencement of such illness will be allowed 5s per week as superannuation during incapacity.

Funeral Allowance, £20 at the death of a Member, and £10 at the death of a Member's Wife.

In addition to the foregoing provision is made for the admission of Honorary Members, Reduced Benefit Members, and the establishment of Sisters' Branches and Juvenile Contingents. Full information may be obtained from Local Branch Officers or direct from the District Secretary.

The District Officers are anxious to open New Branches, and will give all possible assistance and information to applicants, Branches being established in the various centres throughout the Colonies an invaluable measure of reciprocity obtains.

W. KANE,

District Secretary,
Auckland.