

## BISHOP CLEARY

## AND A CHAPLAINS' ASSOCIATION.

## INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE.

In connection with the large military camp recently held at Hautapu, near Cambridge (Waikato), arrangements were made by Bishop Cleary and the Auckland branch of the Catholic Federation for the supply of a large marquee for Mass for the Catholic troops on the Sunday, and for social purposes during the continuance of the camp. A duly credited Catholic Federation official accompanied the marquee. On his arrival in camp he found other religious bodies' marquees blown down and damaged by a storm. The Catholic marquee was in perfect order and capable of accommodating 700 men. The Catholic Federation official and Dean Darby report that they separately arranged with the camp officials for the erection of the Catholic marquee for Mass on the following (Sunday) morning, and secured definite promises that this would be done. For some still unexplained reason, however, the marquee was not erected then; and the Catholic Federation official reported to his branch that, failing to secure its erection at any time, he returned with it to Auckland, after it had been lying for five days in camp. This unexplained default of the camp authorities was made the subject of sharp strictures by Dean Darby, which were widely published. Both at the camp and in the *Auckland Star* of May 12, the Dean made it clear that his whole and sole cause of quarrel was the failure of the camp officials to erect the Catholic marquee, which resulted in the Catholic troops being deprived of Sunday Mass. On the following day (May 13) the Auckland Chaplains' Association, a mixed religious body, published in the same paper (the *Auckland Star*) a strongly-worded condemnation of the Dean. The Association represented the Dean as heartlessly and selfishly quarrelling with the camp authorities for failing to re-erect for Mass the damaged C.Y.M.S. marquee, blown down by the storm—a matter on which the Dean had no difference of opinion whatever with the camp authorities. This was made abundantly clear by his statement published the day before the publication of the Association's curious error as to the cause of the trouble, and its somewhat vehement judgment thereon. The following correspondence on the matter has taken place between his Lordship the Bishop and the Chaplains' Association:—

Bishop's House,  
Ponsonby, Auckland,  
May 13, 1914.

The Rev. Secretary,  
Auckland Chaplains' Association.

Dear Rev. Sir,—I have read in the Auckland daily papers a report of a recent meeting of your Association, together with an official letter sent therefrom for publication. Both report and letter pass a definite and strongly-worded judgment on the action of a Catholic military chaplain (the Very Rev. Dean Darby), in reference to the lack of facilities for Mass at the Hautapu camp on last Sunday.

I refrain from expressing any opinion on the merits or demerits of the incident in question, as the full facts from both sides are not yet before me. At the same time (judging from both the meeting and the published letter of your Association) a number of facts are before me which were apparently not within the cognisance of your Association.

My aim in writing this letter is, however, to touch upon a matter of much more permanent interest than the Hautapu incident, which will, doubtless, be forgotten in a few days, leaving the parties to the passing misunderstanding (or whatever it may have been) better friends than before. My object is to ascertain if it is a rule or practice of your Association to act as a Court of Honor—to try, and to pass judgment in form upon, members (and even *absent* non-members) of your Association, and to give such judgments to the world through the public press.

Of course, I fully recognise the right of the Defence authorities, and of the proper military officers, to condemn any act or default of military chaplains that may contravene the legitimate usages and regulations of camp life. Thus far, however, I have had no communication whatever from them on the subject in question. But I am at present unable to recognise any such authority as being vested in a private organisation such as yours. I should feel it my duty to reprimand any Catholic chaplain under my jurisdiction who would thus sit in judgment upon a chaplain of another faith. And I am unable even to surmise the nature and source of the authority under which your Association has (so to speak) court-martialled (in his absence), and published an adverse judgment upon, a military chaplain who has never been a member of your Association; who, in spiritual matters, is (both in and out of camp) under my jurisdiction (not under that of your Association); and who, in regard to military regulations and ordinances, is subject only to the control of the military authorities legally constituted and empowered thereto. These have the amplest powers to enforce discipline; and they are abundantly able to defend their honor if it be questioned or impugned. As for your Association, it was not even mentioned by the parties to this passing dispute. Its standing as a court in the matter is, therefore, not at all clear.

In the event of your Association affirming the possession of such powers of acting (so to speak) as an ecclesiastical court-martial, it will be my plain duty to insist upon the immediate resignation, therefrom, of all Catholic chaplains deriving spiritual jurisdiction from me. If, furthermore, it should appear that such powers have been conferred upon your Association by virtue of any military order or regulation, I shall take the earliest opportunity of notifying the Defence Department that no Catholic chaplain will attend any camp in my diocese until such order or regulation has been rescinded.

When your Association referred (in a certain unhappy context) to Dean Darby and '*his mass*,' I feel sure that it intended no slight to the most sacred act of worship of Catholics. But the expression, in its setting, has given much offence to many of my priests and people. In any case the Association's idea might have been, with advantage, expressed in somewhat different terms.

Awaiting the favor of an early reply, I remain, dear Rev. Sir, very faithfully yours,

\* HENRY W. CLEARY,  
Bishop of Auckland.

Bishop's House,  
Ponsonby, Auckland,  
May 21, 1914.

The Rev. Secretary,  
Auckland Chaplains' Association.

Dear Rev. Sir,—Nine days ago I mailed to your Association a letter of inquiry on a matter of some present and permanent interest and importance. Thus far, I have not been favored with acknowledgment of receipt of my letter. Will you be kind enough to let me know (1) if my letter has been received by you, and (2) if your Association will do me the favor of considering its contents at their earliest convenience?

As your Association has already partly stated its position on this matter in the press, I claim—and accord to your Association—the right to publish my letter and any further correspondence that may arise out of it, at any time, and at any stage of the correspondence that each party may deem fit.—I remain, dear Rev. Sir, faithfully yours,

\* HENRY W. CLEARY,  
Bishop of Auckland.

The Manse,  
Devonport, May 22, 1914.

To the Right Rev.

Bishop Cleary, D.D.

Dear Sir,—I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter, but it was unavoidable.