

1901.

NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND CONTINGENTS FOR SOUTH AFRICA:

REPORT BY LIEUT.-COLONEL PORTER, COMMANDING SEVENTH NEW ZEALAND CONTINGENT.

Laid on the Table of both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

REPORT IN CONTINUATION OF REPORT FORWARDED TO 6TH JUNE LAST.

Pretoria, 10th July, 1901.

JUNE 6: Trek No. 2. Marched on second "trek" with column under Brigadier Grey, direction Bethel, and was engaged on line of march with enemy from 7th to 11th.

June 11: The regiment made silent night-march to attack Boer artillery outpost near Boshman's Kop. At daylight the post was surrounded at a farmhouse occupied by detachment of the Staats Artillery, part of commando of Commandants Meyers and Bredenburg. Our men killed one Boer, wounded two others, and captured one lieutenant, one adjutant, one sergeant-major, and six members of the Staats Artillery. The main body of Boers had moved with their guns twenty-four hours previously. The enemy, from kopjes on left and front, attacked us at long ranges, but were driven off by shells from the big guns. No casualties on our side except horses shot. I obtained from the bandoliers of the prisoners a number of "dum-dum" and expanding-bullet cartridges.

June 13: We had a rear-guard action with the Boers, and Sergeant Cotter, while retiring in the rear firing-screen, was shot dead, riddled by five bullets, and died gallantly fighting the pressing-on Boers. A number of horses were shot dead, and many hits were made in water-bottles, watches, and rifles, and many had narrow escapes, all behaving well. While engaged in rear of the column heavy fire was heard in the direction of the convoy, and the column moved at once, to protect and reinforce. The Boers, evidently having seen the column divided, had fiercely attacked the convoy, which we were just in time to relieve. Our casualties were—No. 2495, Sergeant John William Cotter, killed; No. 4554, D. McAuley, wounded in thigh (severe); and 4575, J. H. Templeton, arm (slight). The commandoes that we were opposed to were those of Commandants Meyers and Bredenburg. Throughout the fighting the New-Zealanders behaved very steadily.

June 14. Reitfontein: The column marched in the direction of Bethel, and at about 11 a.m. was fiercely opposed by Boers from front and both flanks. I was in command of the advance and received the brunt of the action, which soon became general, and lasted for about two hours and a half, the Boers being repulsed in all their attacks, front and flanks, with considerable loss. This day's fighting afforded many opportunities of developing useful lessons in attack and defence. Our casualties were: Wounded—No. 4662, J. W. Hulme, arm (slight); No. 4666, Jesse W. Smith, both hips (severe). Killed—A. Russell, of Q.I.B.

June 15: The Boers attacked the column hotly in the rear, but the casualties on our side were *nil*.

June 16: The main body, under the Brigadier and Colonel White, made a detour to the left flank, and left me in command of the convoy. The Boers, evidently knowing the flying column had left the convoy weak, made a determined attack upon it, and I had my hands full, with urgent demands for reinforcements from all quarters. The rear-guard, found by the Q.I.B., allowed themselves to be outflanked, and during the action suffered casualties—Killed, J. H. Matthews; wounded, W. McLelland, A. L. Gould, and W. Logan. The following brigade order appeared on the 16th:—

"*Brigade Order.*—The officer commanding column desires to express his appreciation of the conduct of the troops during the fighting of the last few days. The enemy has been very active and enterprising, but his frequent attacks have been met and repulsed with a steadiness which reflects great credit on the troops."