

The reinforcements sent from other points of Australia have raised the number of Troops in New Zealand to about 1800 men, besides Volunteers and a Naval Brigade of about 500 men, furnished from the Ships of War which are now on the Coast of New Zealand. There are now four, and will shortly be five such Ships.

I do not, however, collect from your Despatches that any Volunteers have offered to come forward in aid of Her Majesty's Government except those persons who have armed in defence of their own Homes, or have been compelled to leave them.

Under these circumstances you and your Advisers request that three Regiments of Infantry and one of Artillery may be sent out, partly in order to provide against the possibility of a general rising of the Natives, and partly in order to enable you to take, under any circumstances which may occur, a commanding tone respecting the various questions at issue between the Settlers and the Maories.

The Native Secretary, I observe, has remarked that with less than 5000 Troops (involving an expense of about £150,000 per annum) it would not be possible to defend all the outlying settlements in the Colony; and Mr. Richmond closes his able and interesting Memorandum with the following words :—

“Justice, therefore, and Humanity require, that England should freely recognise the onerous duties ‘‘cast upon her by the colonization of New Zealand. To avert such calamities as seem to impend, it ‘‘is indispensable to place at the disposal of the Governor, a Military and Naval Force, adequate to ‘‘support him in a policy of equal justice to the two Races which have been placed by Providence in a ‘‘relation to each other so singular and difficult.”

I must at once say that in the present position of affairs, and with the demands for Troops which exist, or may be expected in other quarters, it is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to comply with your desire to receive 5000 or 4000 soldiers in addition to your present Force. Measures, however, have been taken to despatch the 14th Regiment at once for the relief of the 65th, which will be allowed to remain in the Colony for the present in case, on the arrival of the 14th, the immediate danger should not have passed over. I trust that it will have passed over, and if this should prove the case, I cannot but believe that wise government, and prudent conduct on the part of the Settlers, will do far more than an increased Military Force to maintain the relations between the Europeans and Natives on a satisfactory footing.

Meantime I must observe, that although it is the desire of Her Majesty's Government to provide fully for the performance of those duties which the Mother Country owes to her Colonies, I cannot silently accept what appears to be the Colonial estimate of their responsibilities.

England cannot undertake the defence, against a nation of warlike savages, of a number of scattered farms or villages, selected not with any view to such defence, but to the profitable pursuit of peaceful industry, and subject to the risks which necessarily attend the occupation of land in the midst of an uncivilized population.

Nor can Her Majesty's Government undertake to provide such a Force as will secure the Colonists against prospective difficulties. Immediate and imminent dangers must be met as they arise. But a policy which requires the continual presence of a large Force carries in most cases its condemnation on its face.

What is the degree of protection which the inhabitants of a British Colony are entitled to expect from the Home Government is a matter on which it is impossible to speak in the abstract. It is no doubt necessary to punish aggression, to defend the centres of population, to maintain a hold upon the keys of the Country. But beyond this, the amount of assistance given must depend on the demands to which the Military and Naval Forces of the Country are subjected elsewhere, and on the urgency of the case, as shewn not merely by demands for assistance, but by the disposition of the Colonists to adopt their share of the necessary expenses; to incur for the defence of their neighbours the dangers and inconveniences of personal service, and to place in the hands of the Home Government the power of controlling the treatment of those whom they are called upon to subdue.

And I cannot refrain from observing that neither your Despatches nor Mr. Richmond's Memorandum, indicate any definite intention on the part of the Colonists to contribute to the expense of the Troops whom they demand,—that the Volunteering appears to be confined to the particular localities threatened,—and that Mr. Richmond, while calling upon the Home Government to adopt the expenses of the War, does not even hint at the propriety of investing it with any larger powers than they at present possess for dealing with the Native question out of which these expenses arise. I may add that a Bill introduced into Parliament to provide an effectual machinery for the exercise by the Crown of the powers reserved to it by the Constitution Act, is threatened with a determined opposition by gentlemen professing to represent the feelings of the Colonists.

This you will perceive on perusing a pamphlet which I enclose in another Despatch.

I allude to these circumstances not, of course, as relieving the Home Government from the duty of supporting the Colony against a pressing danger, but because they must materially affect the disposition of the British Government and people to undertake that indefinite expenditure of Blood and Treasure to which Mr. Richmond invites them.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) G. C. LEWIS.

Governor Gore Browne,
&c., &c., &c.