

No. 2.

COPY OF A DESPATCH FROM GOVERNOR GORE BROWNE TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF
NEWCASTLE, K.G.

No. 140.

NAVAL.

Government House, Auckland, New Zealand,
24th December, 1860.

MY LORD DUKE,—

In reply to Sir G. C. Lewis' circular despatch, dated 10th of August last, desiring to be informed of the views which may be entertained by the Government of New Zealand upon certain points connected with the Naval protection of the Australian Colonies, I have the honor to forward a copy of a memorandum signed by Mr. Stafford, on behalf of the Responsible Ministers of this Colony.

Lord C. Paget observes that, "since it is obvious that in the event of war, many advantages might be derived, and the maritime means of the country might be increased by having recourse to the resources of those distant Colonies, it might be proper that the opinions of the Governors of the Colonies should be at once ascertained, with a view to some uniform regulations, or enactments, applicable to Colonial vessels and to the Colonies at large."

In reference to this subject, I beg to observe, that a Colonial force—whether Naval or Military—costs at least three times as much as one of equal strength employed by the Imperial Government; that a Colonial Force is not available for General Service, and as it does not offer the same prospect of rank and promotion as the Royal Service, it is not likely to be so well commanded. It appears, therefore, that Colonial resources would be most advantageously developed by their contributing towards the expense of protection to be furnished by the Imperial Government.

Assuming that a squadron of a certain strength is required in time of peace for the protection of the Australian Colonies, and for that of British subjects in Melanesia, the Colonies might be called on to pay a certain percentage of the cost of the vessels in the manner now agreed on for the Royal Troops stationed in New Zealand.

There is, however, a difficulty attending the employment of the Royal Navy which deserves consideration. The Governor of a Colony may request the Officer in command to perform a service which he considers to be of vital importance, but the Naval Commander may take a different view and decline to attend to the request. It is quite true that the propriety or impropriety of such a refusal will be decided by superior authority in England, but in the mean time the service may remain unexecuted until it is too late to avert the consequences.

Being fully aware of this, it is not improbable that Colonial Legislatures would be unwilling to contribute towards the maintenance of a fleet, the usefulness of which must depend so much on the temperament of individual Commanders, responsible to no authority nearer than England.

I have, &c.,

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle,
&c., &c., &c.

T. GORE BROWNE.

Enclosure in No. 2.

MEMORANDUM BY MR. STAFFORD.

The present Ministry of New Zealand has on previous occasions expressed the opinion that the Naval defence of Colonies would be best provided for by permanently stationing vessels of Her Majesty's Navy at each Colony or group of Colonies. The number, cost, and maintenance of these ships to be agreed on between the Imperial and Local Governments, except in the case of Colonies governed from Downing Street, where the Imperial Government would alone decide the question.

The system of separate Colonial Fleets appears open to grave objections, amongst which the mode in which they are officered, and the position they are to occupy relative to Her Majesty's Navy, are among the least.

The latter question does not affect New Zealand directly at present, nor is it likely to do so for some time to come, as it is not probable that, for some years at least, this Colony will seek to establish vessels of its own for its defence by sea, unless the neglect of the Imperial Government to protect its shores should reluctantly compel it to do so.

E. W. STAFFORD.

November 27th, 1860.

No. 3.

COPY OF A DESPATCH FROM GOVERNOR GORE BROWNE TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.

No. 64.

NAVAL.

Government House, Auckland, New Zealand,
2nd May, 1861.

MY LORD DUKE,—

I have the honor to call your Grace's attention to the enclosed copy of correspondence between Colonel Warre, C.B. (acting as my Deputy during my absence from Auckland), and Commodore Seymour, and between Commodore Seymour and myself.

Col. Warre, 5th April.
Commodore Seymour in
reply, 5th April, 1861.