

Quartermaster-General in New Zealand from the 8th of September to the 7th November, 1864, from which I extract the following statements :—

“Head Quarters, Auckland, 7th November, 1864.

“Immediately after the despatch of the last journal (7th September) a very unexpected occurrence took place—the escape (on 10th September) of the whole of the Maori prisoners from Kawau, which has had a very important bearing on the political aspects, and may possibly have a serious effect on the military operations of the war.

* * * * *
“Happily as yet no disaster has resulted from the escape of the prisoners, but as they are still at large, and have established themselves (though with professedly peaceable intentions) on the Omaha Mountain, where they have been joined by a few other Natives, it is still quite impossible to conjecture what the result will be.

“It is however satisfactory that the Northern Natives have, as a rule, disowned any sympathies with the escaped prisoners.

“The country between New Plymouth (Taranaki) and Wanganui was, at the date of my last report, the contemplated scene of the next operations to be undertaken. The escape of the prisoners, and the possible complications it might lead to in the North, would of course reduce the number of troops to be available for operations in the South, and might possibly, when the time for action came, forbid the removal of any troops whatever from the Province (Auckland).

“Preparations for the intended move of troops to Wanganui and Taranaki were commenced in the way of Commissariat arrangements, and the embarkation of the first detachment of the Transport Corps, when further progress was ordered to be suspended.

* * * * *
“Now though the time favorable for active operations has arrived, none can be undertaken for a month; but until the danger in the North has passed, the large number of troops at present at Otahuhu, near Auckland, though inactive, are in the most convenient position, and ready for any emergency that may arise.”

5. I feel satisfied that the foregoing statements made by the Deputy Quartermaster-General from Head Quarters, must satisfy every one that Sir D. Cameron not only knew, at least in August, 1864, that I had determined that operations should be undertaken in the country between Taranaki and Wanganui, but that the movement of troops for that purpose was commenced before the 7th September, 1864, when the operations were interrupted by a serious danger which suddenly and unexpectedly threatened the Province of Auckland.

6. But in truth Sir D. Cameron's own letters also conclusively show that the delay of three months in the intended operations had nothing whatever to do with his not attacking the Weraroa Pa. Many passages could be cited to prove this, but one will probably suffice taken from his letter to me of the 17th of March:—

“On that occasion I explained to you why I had refrained from attacking the Weraroa Pa when I was at Nukumarū, viz., that the position was so formidable, and at the same time occupied in such strength by the rebels, that I considered it could not be taken without serious loss to us, uncompensated by any corresponding loss on the side of the rebels, who could at any time escape into the bush with impunity. I stated that this was the reason why I had advanced to the Waitotara, afterwards to the Patea, and why I thought it necessary to consult you as to future operations.”

7. This conclusion was come to at the time that Sir D. Cameron was erroneously so strongly impressed with the idea of the strength of the enemy, and with the determined nature of the resistance they intended to offer, that he stated he could not advance even as far as the Patea without reinforcements from home of at least 2000 men, and it clearly had nothing to do with the delay of three months which had taken place in his proceeding from Auckland to Taranaki, and from thence to Wanganui.

Appendix B.

Copy of a letter from Sir George Grey to Lieut.-General Sir D. A. Cameron.

MY DEAR GENERAL,—

Wanganui, 13th March, 1865.

I again talked over with the Colonial Ministers your recommendation that I should apply to England for a reinforcement of at least two thousand men.

I found that it would be impossible for me to obtain their concurrence in such a recommendation, for various reasons, which they stated at length. They came to this conclusion entirely on their own convictions, and I came to the same decision for the following reasons:—

I think it essential to the future peace of the country that the whole line of coast between this and Taranaki should be open to us, in fact occupied by us, and that friendly relations should exist between us and the Natives inhabiting that tract of country. The sooner these ends are gained, the more speedily will peace be restored to all New Zealand. Believing this, I am naturally anxious to see these ends attained as soon as possible.

What remains to be done, however, after you have subdued the country north of Wanganui, even so far as Patea, is not, in my belief, more than the Colony ought to be able to accomplish in say two years from the present time, from its own resources.

If therefore the force you have is not sufficient to enable you to occupy the country which remains between the Patea and the point Colonel Warre can advance to, I think the Colony must be satisfied with what you can do with the resources at your disposal; and that after all England has done for it, it ought not to call upon Great Britain to send further large reinforcements here. I really should feel most unwilling to make such a demand.

Everything that is now taking place leads me to the conclusion that the Natives will soon submit in nearly all parts of the Island, and once they do submit, they return much more speedily to friendly relations with us than you would suppose. If I am right in this view, the war might be nearly terminated before further reinforcements could arrive.

I have, &c.,

Lieut.-General Sir D. A. Cameron, K.C.B.

G. GREY.