

with this matter, conveyed in this and previous Despatches, Ministers would not feel bound to comment on this particular Despatch were it not that towards the close it circulates calumnies, scarcely disguised under a veil of hypothesis, against the Colonial Government and Her Majesty's Colonial Forces. Ministers do not now complain that Lord Carnarvon should in effect state, as he has done in a previous portion of his Despatch, that the Imperial Government would rather abandon the Colonists and the Aborigines of New Zealand to internecine war than extend to the Colony any military aid. They are not aware that any words or action on the part of the Governor or on their part called for such a statement, but they do not desire to question this professed indifference to the horrors which a war of extermination would, "for a time at least," entail on both races in this country.

Ministers must, however, for the sake of the public character of the Colony, distinctly repudiate the charges indirectly conveyed in the following extracts from the Despatch:—

"Finally, I must observe, that while you thus appear to cling to the expectation of continued assistance from this country, your own reports, or rather the absence of reports from you, show how little you recognize any continued responsibility to the Imperial Government for the conduct of the war. While in your Despatch of the 15th October you inform me that a trooper of the Colonial Forces had been killed by some hostile Natives, you leave me to learn from the newspapers that in the neighbourhood of Hawke's Bay a body of Natives who refused to give up their arms, had been attacked by the Colonial Forces in their pa (which is said to have been unfortified), and driven into the bush, twenty-three of them being killed, and a like number wounded; and that a Native village on the West Coast, after being summoned to surrender, was attacked by a Colonial Force, and escape being cut off, about thirty or forty persons were killed.

"In the account before me this last transaction is described as 'the most brilliant of this guerilla war.' Meantime your own Despatches would hardly lead me to suppose that any recognized warfare was in progress. I need hardly observe that if at any time it were alleged in this country that these affairs—described by the Colonial press as brilliant successes—were in fact unwarranted and merciless attacks on unoffending persons, I have no authentic means of reply afforded me by your Despatches."

The first intimation of these calumnies reaches the Governor and his Ministers in this Despatch. So far as Ministers are aware, no question of the justice of the attacks on the Natives, either at Hawke's Bay or on the West Coast, or of the conduct of the Colonial Forces on those occasions has ever been publicly raised in this Colony, or in the United Kingdom. Nor were they aware until they read the Despatch that the question had even been privately raised. The inference is painfully clear. The Secretary of State has allowed himself to be influenced by some secret report, studiously concealed from the Governor, from his Ministers, and from the public, and without resorting to authentic intelligence, or waiting a few days for a Despatch from the Governor, has given authoritative currency to such report.

Ministers do greatly complain of that fatal facility, unhappily so often illustrated of late in some Imperial Departments of State, of listening to secret slander of the reputation of public men in this Colony, and of investing reports (which otherwise would never come to life,) with the authority of official recognition. Against this system of secret defamation Ministers most emphatically protest. It saps the foundations of all government, and destroys all confidence in public men. In the case of New Zealand, the tacit allowance, if not encouragement, in the War Department at Home of such a system, has, Ministers believe, done much to waste the resources of the Empire and the Colony, and to paralyze their joint efforts to suppress insurrection.

The engagements to which the Secretary of State refers respectively took place, near Napier, on the 12th October, 1866, and, on the West Coast, on the 4th October, 1866. Despatches fully reporting the circumstances of each engagement were published in the *New Zealand Gazette* dated respectively 26th October, and 11th October, 1866. These *Gazettes* most probably reached England, and, it is presumed, the Colonial Office, before the 28th December, 1866 (the date on which Lord Carnarvon wrote), and certainly did so before the 2nd January, 1867, and could have been referred to by His Lordship before the mail by which his Despatch came left England for New Zealand. No doubt the reports in these *Gazettes* if they could not be found in the Colonial Office were republished in English papers, and were accessible to those who preferred to furnish to the Secretary of State information gathered from anonymous accounts in unnamed newspapers, and to found on it and on "private and confidential" calumnies, imputations of wanton cruelty and cowardice on the part of the Colonial Forces, and of connivance (if not worse) on the part of the Governor and his Ministers. The Despatch is dated 28th December, but it did not leave England till the 2nd January. On the 31st December, the New Zealand mail *via* Panama reached England, having left New Zealand on the 8th November, a fortnight after the later of the two *Gazettes* containing the official accounts of the engagements was published. Reference could thus have been made in England to these *Gazettes* before the Despatch went. Had that reference been made, or had Lord Carnarvon waited a few days until the Governor's Despatches arrived, which His Excellency's absence in a remote disturbed district precluded him from writing previously (a fact which might quite as easily have been learned from newspapers), Ministers feel assured that His Lordship would not have written in terms so disparaging to the Colonial Forces, and so injurious to the honor of the Colony.

Copies of the *New Zealand Gazette* referred to are enclosed. The circumstances in each case are shortly these:—

Napier is a small town containing a population of thirteen hundred souls, of whom more than eight hundred are women and children. It was at the time in question wholly unprepared for an attack, and its neighbourhood is dotted with small agricultural and pastoral farms on which families also quite unprotected reside. In the latter part of September, 1866, a party of armed rebel Hau Hau Natives, strangers to the place, and members of a murderous and bloodthirsty sect of fanatics, who have committed in different parts of this Island fearful atrocities, encamped at a place about seven miles from the town. A copy of a letter dated 9th October, 1866, to the Colonial Secretary from Mr. McLean, reporting the fact, is attached. These Natives persistently refused to explain their intentions; they plundered the settlers and the loyal resident Natives; and they openly