

officer, on the 2nd April, 1867, ten days before the Despatch now in question arrived in the Colony, reported that he had disbursed above £20,000 on account of these repayments, and drew attention to the irregularity in the transmission by the Commissariat of these accounts, and to the delay that, in one or two instances, arose in consequence. This Minute was communicated by the Governor, at the request of his Ministers, to the Military Authorities, with a view of expediting these repayments.

If unnecessary delay had occurred it would only have been reasonable that the Officer in charge of the Commissariat should have called the attention of the Colonial Government to the subject before writing to the Imperial Treasury on the 8th November last, and have waited a sufficient time to allow a reply to be received, but, instead of adopting this course, Mr. Strickland secretly wrote to the Imperial Treasury in terms virtually charging the Colonial Government with repudiation and breach of faith.

As an illustration of the irregularity of the claims made by the Commissariat on the Colonial Treasury, Ministers would refer to their Memorandum transmitted to the Secretary of State in Despatch No. 52 of the 29th April, in which attention is directed to the circumstance that Commissariat Officers had insisted on monthly receipts in advance before they gave the orders to Contractors for rations, and had (in some instances in which the Contractors had not fulfilled those orders) actually charged the Colony for rations which the Colonial Forces had never received, and had refused to amend their accounts, or to compel the Contractors to complete their contracts.

Causes of delay beyond the control of Ministers arise in the adjustment of Commissariat accounts, from the absence of the Military Authorities from the seat of Government, and from the Regulation insisted upon by the Imperial Government, that Military correspondence should go through the Governor. Accordingly correspondence on mere matters of account has to be conducted between the General, whose residence is 400 miles from the seat of Government, and the Governor, whose residence is at such seat and then between the Governor and Ministers. Thus a considerable time is lost in discussing questions which could, if the Military Head-Quarters were at the seat of Government, be settled in a few hours.

The second point urged by Mr. Strickland is that the Colony has made no provision for the capitation charge on account of Imperial Troops.

If Mr. Strickland had chosen to refer to authentic means of information contained in published official correspondence, and in the records of the military offices in the Colony and of his own Department, in place of basing his assertions on a "report current on high authority," or on what "is announced in the local press," or on what he terms, without quoting any authority, "no vague and irresponsible reports," his statements might not have been so wide of the question.

In the Enclosure to the Despatch of the Secretary of State to the Governor, No. 32, 26th March, 1866, Mr. Hamilton, Secretary to the Treasury, states "that as regards the question raised in these papers as to the capitation rate for Her Majesty's troops in New Zealand, my Lords do not at present express any opinion." The question raised was, that the Colony was not now liable to the capitation charge. Mr. Hamilton adds, "that my Lords propose to instruct Commissary-General Jones to put himself in communication with any person who may be deputed by the Colonial Government for that purpose, and to go minutely into the several items comprehended in this account, both claims and counter-claims (exclusive of the capitation charge) reporting to this Board the result which may be arrived at." It is, therefore, evident that the Commissariat Department must at the time have been informed that the capitation charge was not for the present asked for.

Mr. Strickland further states, "no appropriation has been made by it for the Imperial Troops now in the Colony, not even, as far as I can learn for the one battalion of Infantry which was to have been detained under special conditions, and which I am informed by you is to form the Imperial military force in this Colony." Had Mr. Strickland taken the trouble to refer to these special conditions, or to the officer in command in the Colony, he would have learned that no capitation charge was to be made on account of the one regiment which was to be left in the Colony.

The third point is that of aggressive war.

Mr. Strickland, in his letter to the Imperial Treasury, states that "A portion of the Imperial Troops are actively engaged in aggressive warfare, at an increased expense to the Imperial Treasury;" and in order to leave no doubt as to the person against whom this charge is made, he writes in the enclosure, addressed to General Chute, "Even now it is announced in the local Press that His Excellency the Governor has recently organized an expedition upon the West Coast for purposes of aggression." Ministers cannot understand how, consistently with the rules of the service, Major-General Chute could have received such a letter from a subordinate officer, and have withheld it from the knowledge of the Governor. They do not, however, think it necessary to vindicate either the Governor, or themselves, against Mr. Strickland's charge, gross as it is, and are glad to see that the Secretary of State does not, in his Despatch, deem that it requires explanation. The Despatches of the Governor and the Memoranda of his Responsible Advisers, show that any operation of the Imperial or Colonial Forces on the West Coast, or anywhere else in New Zealand, instead of being conducted for purposes of aggression, was, on the contrary, for the purpose of defending life and repressing outrage; and this has been repeatedly admitted in the Despatches of Secretaries of State. Ministers, however, point to Mr. Strickland's letters as a signal illustration of the growth of that vicious system, to which they referred in their Memorandum of the 17th ultimo, of allowing secret accusations against the Colonial Government to be addressed by Imperial Departments in the Colony to the Imperial Government, and submit how utterly subversive of discipline (setting aside other objections) it is that an officer in the position held by Mr. Strickland should secretly write in such calumnious terms of the Representative of the Crown.

Having dealt with the charges contained in Mr. Strickland's letters, Ministers decline to discuss the views which he expresses on past, or future, Colonial policy. They are not aware that the duties of his department specially qualify, or entitle, him to propound opinions on such matters. Certainly the desultory opinions expressed in his letters claim no particular consideration; they are vague and void of practical point, and are apparently prompted by a general feeling of discontent, the cause of which is not manifest unless, indeed, it arose from the rejection of the claim he pressed on the Colonial