

Company by direction of Lord Stanley, in the following forcible words:—"It is impossible to conduct the affairs of any Colony with safety or propriety by a correspondence carried on between the Colonists and the Secretary of State, whether directly or through the intervention of third parties resident in England, but without the intervention of the Governor. Such a practice would expose the Secretary of State to be misled by partial and unfair representations of persons blinded by local prejudices, local feuds, or personal interests. It would place the Governor in a position intolerable to any man of correct feelings and of proper self-respect. It would be destructive of all mutual confidence between the head of this office and the head of the local Governments, and it would invert the proper rule of responsibility by making the Secretary of State answerable for originating, not for approving, measures of local concern, and by making the Governor responsible not for the origination of such measures, but for obedience to instructions respecting them written at such a distance as to render the means of accurate knowledge unattainable. For these reasons Lord Stanley's predecessors have invariably maintained, and His Lordship has adopted, the rule, that complaints of the acts or omissions of a Governor transmitted from a Colony without the intervention of the Governor, or the simultaneous communication of such complaints to him, cannot be entertained until the Governor shall have obtained and reported on a copy of the complaint." And it is added that "This principle will, on all future as on all past occasions, be the rule of Lord Stanley's official conduct."

The Earl of Derby (then Lord Stanley) is now Prime Minister; the Governor and Colonists of New Zealand are the object of calumnious attack, and the calumniators are officers of the Imperial Government itself. The Colonial Government claims from His Lordship that justice which, twenty-three years ago, under similar circumstances, he so distinctly upheld.

The rule is founded on that inherent justice which requires fair play between man and man. The violation of that rule in respect of a distant Government is fraught with evils, infinitely aggravated when that violation proceeds from Departments of State; for in the latter case it at once divides the Government against itself, creates antagonism where co-operation is essential, and has, in New Zealand, produced a series of calamities. Mutual distrust, bitter recrimination, exasperation of race against race, irresolute action, waste of blood and treasure, needless prolongation of war, and enhanced difficulty of re-establishing peace and restoring general confidence, form part of the melancholy catalogue.

The past is now irretrievable, but a legacy of evil is left, and the complete withdrawal of Imperial Troops cannot, as the Secretary of State seems to think, either annul that fatal bequest, or absolve the Imperial Government from responsibility for the consequences. The Crown of Great Britain is bound to the Native race in New Zealand by obligations which cannot be ignored, and which Her Majesty has solemnly commanded Her successive Governors honourably and scrupulously to fulfil. The Imperial Government has relinquished that fulfilment at a time when the Natives were in arms against Her Majesty, and has transferred its obligations to the Colonial Government when the inhabitants of New Zealand are embittered by the unmerited obloquy systematically heaped on the Colony by Imperial departments, whose course of action has naturally excited deep indignation among the Colonists, and has implanted in the disaffected native mind a strong though mistaken sense of oppression and a fierce spirit of resentment. For language of the kind so often used in the Despatches of high Imperial Officers, imputing to the Colonists selfish motives and cruel acts in their treatment of Natives, soon comes to Native ears, and the results cannot be better described (although now with a thousandfold weightier application) than in the following words used by Earl Grey, when Secretary of State, in his Despatch No. 108, November 30, 1847, to Sir George Grey:—

"I fear that it is impossible that language such as that of this protest can be addressed to a people who have so lately emerged from habits of the most savage barbarism,—a people well armed and warlike, of easily excited passions and minds untrained to European habits of obedience—without very serious risk." And again—"When I reflect on the scenes of which some parts of this Colony have been lately the theatre, and the passions which have been aroused by questions arising out of this very subject, it appears to me that those who use such language incur a heavy responsibility, and the heavier in proportion to the eminence of their station."

At this conjuncture the Imperial troops are withdrawn, in which Ministers acquiesce, for the good intention of the British nation in sending them to the Colony has been entirely frustrated. Not only were the Military Departments, over which the Colony had no control, perverted into instruments of defaming its character, but they even discharged their legitimate functions so as to entail on the Colony an enormous expenditure wholly disproportionate to its means, and with comparatively small practical results. Even one regiment was not to be left, except on conditions which would render it useless, and make the commanding officer independent of the constitutional control of the Governor. But the withdrawal of the troops has been effected, as has been shown in recent Despatches of the Governor and in Ministerial Memoranda, in a manner calculated still further to engender animosity, to inspire the disloyal Natives with revived hopes, and the loyal with distrust. The whole system to which the Colony has been forcibly subjected has been most injurious both to its reputation and to its purse, and when a fair and unbiassed consideration has been given to the whole circumstances of the case, and to the large sacrifices made by the Colony by imposing on itself heavy additional taxation to enable it to meet liabilities in which it has been involved—but which were not created by itself—Ministers are confident that a sense of justice will induce the Imperial Government spontaneously to recognise the right of the Colony to be indemnified for the losses which it has sustained.

This is a sketch of the present state of the mutual relations of the Imperial Government and of Her Majesty's subjects of either race in New Zealand. The action of the Imperial Government has increased the ever critical character of these relations, but Ministers fully adopt the policy expressed in the words which in 1863, under more cheering circumstances, stated the determination of each House of the Colonial Legislature "to use its best endeavours to secure a sound and lasting peace; to do justice impartially to both races of Her Majesty's subjects, and to promote the civilization and welfare of all classes of the inhabitants of these islands."

Ministers have made these remarks in order to rebut calumny, and, in this most important