

Your Excellency's opinion that the previous movements of troops in New Zealand, which I made without your Excellency's sanction, have in your belief seriously and unnecessarily injured the interests of the Colony, has caused me the deepest regret; but while feeling this regret, as I sincerely do, I have at the same time the consciousness of having simply and strictly obeyed my orders, a consideration which, with me, must ever be paramount to all others.

I have, &c.,

T. CHUTE,

Major-General.

His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B.

Governor Sir GEORGE GREY, K.C.B., to Major-General CHUTE.

SIR,—

Government House, Auckland, 5th June, 1867.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, regarding the proposed redistribution of the 18th Regiment, and in reply I would beg to remark as follows:

If it was necessary to ask me if I desired any different distribution of the regiment than the one you were making, and thus to obtain my approval of the distribution which was to be made, my consent ought long since to have been sought for. To ask me this when all the arrangements had been completed, was really to trifle with myself and my Government; and not to acquaint me with the intended movement of a regiment in this command until everyone else knew it, was to impair my authority and that of my Government, and to seriously weaken it in the eyes of the Native population who gather early information upon all such subjects, and are well aware that many recent movements of troops must have been made against my wish.

If the object in view had been solely the welfare and health of the troops, I should say that this is a point on which myself and my Government are, at least, as anxious as yourself; and it would appear with such an important end in view, to have been only the more necessary that the question now asked me should have been asked at a much earlier date; but, in truth, the location of a detachment at New Plymouth could have had no relation to the health or comfort of the troops.

If from the value of the stores you have retained here, and upon account of the magazine, it is necessary to retain so large a guard for their protection, there is a part of the 50th Regiment still in the Colony which is under your own control, and which, as you are aware, is not required in the Australian Colony, and the cost of which is still to be defrayed from Imperial funds.

To send men from a Colony where you think they are so urgently required, to other Colonies which never asked for them, whilst no saving whatever is affected to Imperial funds by so doing, but on the contrary a very heavy charge for transport is incurred by moving them from New Zealand, seems an unnecessary proceeding; and this especially at a time when a part of the country near Whanganui has, by the recent movements of the troops, again been placed in a position of much peril.

There is, in my opinion, a wide difference between the entire removal of the 18th Regiment from the Colony, and the Officer in command of the Forces here, having the power without the knowledge or consent of the Governor, to move it from place to place within the limits of New Zealand, and in detachments of such strength as he thinks proper.

In the former case, the Government know exactly what force they have to rely upon at each point; they move their own forces directly without having any officer of the Imperial Forces to correspond with. Their own officers, who look to them as their superiors, command the forces at each place, have all the credit of success, and run no risk of being embarrassed by having to act under officers who may be ignorant of the Natives, their mode of warfare, and of the country.

The Government choose their own Commanding Officer at each point, and the Natives learn to respect a Government who exercise a real and efficient control over the forces in the Colony.

In the latter case, the Natives may be either alarmed or encouraged at the most inopportune moments by troops being marched unexpectedly into their vicinity, or withdrawn from it, at a time of danger. The authority of the Governor must be destroyed in the country, by a subordinate officer openly acting in defiance of his well known wishes. The Government can never tell what force they may rely upon to be present at any particular point. Their well arranged plans may fail from the command of the forces being taken out of the hands of a most competent officer and suddenly transferred to the hands of an incompetent man, who has been unexpectedly sent there. The military ardour and spirit of their own officers must be seriously impaired by their knowing there is always a risk of their being suddenly deprived of their commands, and being compelled to serve under an officer who does not possess the knowledge or experience that they do.

Serious political difficulties and party spirit might be created in the country by the military authorities exercising, or being supposed to exercise, the power of fixing the Head Quarters, or locating troops at particular points where they may be desired, if they are supported in their proceedings by inhabitants of those places; and the Governor may also be involved in serious political difficulties by towns or districts believing that he is the obstacle to the Head Quarters being fixed in their locality, or troops being located there, which the General may appear by overt acts to have promised to have done without any previous consultation with the Governor. The party spirit which must spring from such proceedings must paralyze all united effort in the Colony for its own protection, and produce other disastrous results.

With regard to orders having been sent from home, both to you and myself, regarding the movement of the 18th Regiment; and to your remarks that to simply and strictly obey your orders is a consideration which, with you, must ever be paramount to all others, I would observe that to do my duty has been the consideration which has been paramount with me, even if my duty led me to disregard, or to act contrary to, orders issued from the other side of the world, in entire ignorance of the long and important series of events which might have taken place in this Colony between the issue of the orders and their arrival here; and I must still act upon the principle that it is my duty to preserve Her Majesty's possessions, to protect the lives and properties of her subjects of both races, to guide to the best of my ability what is in each case most likely to promote the interests of the Empire,