

10. On the 30th of May the Major-General issued to the officers commanding the troops at Whanganui orders for the distribution of the 18th Regiment as above mentioned.

11. Up to this time I knew nothing, except from public rumour, of these proposed movements. I heard in conversation from one or more private persons that Auckland was to be made the head quarters of the 18th Regiment, and that other movements of troops were about to take place, but I could not credit this. I was in Auckland; myself and my Responsible Advisers were the persons answerable to the Queen for the safety of the country; and I could not think that movements of troops from a disturbed district would have been resolved on for days, and that the persons who would have had to make all the arrangements to meet the difficulties of such ill-advised movements would have been the very last people to have been informed that they were to take place.

12. These movements also were likely to involve the Government in serious political difficulties. Major-General Chute had in fact informed the people of Auckland that their city was to be made the head quarters of the 18th Regiment, and that five companies were to be stationed there. He had in the same manner informed the people of Taranaki that two companies of the 18th were to be located in their Province. The transports were taken up for the conveyance of these troops, every requisite order issued, and it was impossible for myself or my Responsible Advisers to take measures to stop these movements without appearing to act in a spirit unfriendly to the interests of those two places.

13. When matters had reached this point, Major-General Chute first communicated with me on the subject, by informing me in his letter of the 30th of May, that in the absence of any instructions from me regarding the distribution of the 18th Regiment, he proposed locating that corps in the manner above mentioned for the winter, or until orders were received from home; and that if I desired any different distribution of the regiment, he would be glad to receive my instructions.

14. I beg to point out, that there was nothing in this letter which could have led me to infer that the Major-General had taken the conclusive steps in the matter which he had adopted, but that the tendency of the letter was to create a totally opposite impression in my mind.

15. I think if the Major-General deemed my concurrence necessary in the movements of troops which he was making, that I (especially as I was present at his head quarters) was the first person he should have consulted on the subject; and that if he did not deem my concurrence necessary to these movements, still, as I was answerable for the peace of the country, and for providing protection for the points he was stripping of troops, I should equally have been the first person consulted on the subject, and, having had the earliest warning given me, I should also have had ample time allowed to myself and my Ministers to make the requisite arrangements for the protection of the Queen's subjects when the troops were moved.

16. The proceedings taken by Major-General Chute in this case are opposed to the practice hitherto pursued throughout the Empire, and are in breach of the instructions issued by Her Majesty. I feel sure, if they are allowed to be drawn into a precedent, it will be impossible for Colonial Governments successfully to carry on Her Majesty's service. I think if I said that the result of such proceedings must be to embarrass Her Majesty's public servants in Colonies, not to aid them, I should not speak too strongly.

17. When I consulted my Responsible Advisers on their views regarding the distribution of the 18th Regiment, they informed me that they were of opinion that, if the regiment remained to be of any use to the Colony, it should be divided between Tauranga, the Waikato, and Patea. That if the regiment was retained here for Imperial purposes they had nothing to say in the matter; and that they believed, in that case, the sooner it was withdrawn from the Colony the better it would be for their interests.

18. But if the General would now assent to such an arrangement the 18th Regiment could not be stationed at the points named, for the military buildings at