

No. 15.

COPY of a DESPATCH from the Right Hon. the Earl of CARNARVON to
Governor Sir GEORGE GREY, K.C.B.

(No. 49.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 1st December, 1866.

I enclose for your information copies of three letters which I have received from the War Office, with their enclosures.

Oct. 8, 1866.

Oct. 24, 1866.

Oct. 29, 1866.

The most important of these is that which contains copies of General Chute's letter to you of the 26th of July, and of your answer of the 18th of August.

I regret that on a subject so important as that of withdrawing Her Majesty's troops from New Zealand, I should derive almost the whole information which I possess from letters transmitted through another department, and I feel the disadvantage of having to act without your own explanations on intelligence which is thus only communicated to me.

But then the nature and authenticity of that intelligence renders it unavoidable that I should do so. I have indeed delayed sending this Despatch, in hopes that I might receive from you information which might render it unnecessary. Unfortunately, your Despatches this day received, are completely silent on the subject, and leave me no alternative but to make this communication.

In the first place, I observe with regret, that up to the date of the latest official advices, which now reach to the middle of September, five regiments of Infantry were still in New Zealand; and, in endeavouring to ascertain how this has happened, I am struck by the circumstance, that while General Chute appears to have requested as long ago as the 20th and 23rd of April, that he might be enabled to send away the 2nd Battalion of the 14th Regiment, and the Head-Quarter Wing of the 50th Regiment, it was not till the 18th of August—nearly four months afterwards—that you signified to him that you had no objection to this proposal.

The consequence has apparently been the detention of these, and probably of other troops, long after they ought to have left the Colony.

Again, I find, that as long as the 27th of November, 1865, Mr. Cardwell wrote to you in the following terms:—"The reduction now made in the whole number of the Imperial troops remaining in the Colony, renders it necessary that these troops should be concentrated; and you will, if you exercise the power with which you are entrusted, in respect of the three battalions and one battery, or any portion of them, take care, in concert with the General in command, that they are not left in distant and isolated posts."

This instruction, that troops should not be left in distant posts, at a great expense to the Home Government, was applied to troops for whom the Colony was to pay, and was evidently applicable *a fortiori* to troops for whom the Colony refuses to pay anything, and it is but too obvious how large an expense is thrown on the British Treasury by a non-compliance with the instructions of the Home Government. In execution of them, Major-General Chute appears to have addressed to you a letter, dated the 20th of April, in which he wrote as follows:—"As it is clearly the intention of Her Majesty's Government that the troops are not for the future to be dispersed in distant and isolated posts, I beg most urgently to request that I may at once be permitted to withdraw Her Majesty's troops from the outposts in each district, and to concentrate them at the chief towns, viz., Wanganui, New Plymouth, and Auckland, and—should your Excellency think it necessary—at Wellington or Napier, thus enabling me to dispense with all inland transport for which no provision has now been made by Her Majesty's Government."

Yet, on the 18th of August, in answer to a request from General Chute, that he may be authorized to withdraw the troops from the outposts, you write as follows:—"I concur with my Responsible Advisers in thinking, that if all Her Majesty's troops are withdrawn from the outposts, to the chief towns, they would be entirely useless to the Colony, and that I ought not, at the present moment, to give my acquiescence to such an arrangement."

I do not wish to assume in this or in any other part of the correspondence any disposition to oppose yourself to the declared policy of Her Majesty's