

No. 6.

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

(No. 105.)

Government House, Wellington,

MY LORD,—

15th October, 1866.

In reply to Mr. Cardwell's Despatch No. 66, of the 22nd of June, informing me that the Secretary of State for War had decided that the Head Quarters of General Chute were not to be moved from Auckland to Wellington, I have the honor to report that I believe that this decision was come to upon erroneous information as to what I had asked to be done, and that I feel satisfied, if it is adhered to, serious disaster will probably be entailed on the Colony, and a large expenditure on Great Britain.

2. The settlement of the affairs of a country in which a long and wide-spread rebellion has prevailed, is always a matter of the greatest difficulty and nicety. Such a rebellion, and the spirit of disaffection it has engendered, die out by slow degrees; constant changes are taking place in the circumstances of different districts; outbreaks occur, which, if met with promptitude, would be mere local disturbances, but which, if neglected, are likely to cause the flame of rebellion again to blaze up through a large extent of country. Almost hourly precautions require to be taken to prevent such disturbances from breaking out. Such is the actual state of New Zealand at the present moment in one district of the Province of Wellington, and it is essential, at such a time, that the Governor of the country should have constant communication with the Chief Military Authority, who also commands the Local Forces.

3. The Secretary of State for War has nevertheless instructed the General to maintain his Head Quarters at Auckland, fifteen days' distance, in point of time, from the Governor and the Government of the Country, who, under such an arrangement would lose all useful control even over their small local force, which they are doing the utmost to raise and place in a state of efficiency. In fact the means of working out their own safety from their own resources is taken from them.

4. The failure of the General for many months to comply with my request that he would move here, has, I believe, been one main cause of delaying the settlement of the country, and has entailed an unnecessary expenditure upon Great Britain and most serious evils upon the Colony.

5. The sudden removal of so large a body of troops from a country circumstanced as this is, is a very critical operation,—the withdrawal of every post held by the Imperial Troops, and the order in which this has to be done, involves serious questions, as also does the determination of which of these posts are to be held by the Local Forces. It is impossible to conduct such a service satisfactorily whilst the principal Military Authority is at fifteen days' distance from the Government which has to receive a great part of its information from him, and finally to give its instructions to him.

6. I earnestly hope, therefore, that the Secretary of State for War will alter the decision he has come to upon this subject, especially as the grounds on which he came to it, as set forth in General Chute's letter of the 7th of April and its enclosures, are in several respects erroneous, and more especially so in regard to the main statement that I wished all the Commissariat and Military Stores should be removed from Auckland to this place.

7. I shall do my best to make any orders given by Her Majesty's Government work as satisfactorily as possible, but I cannot recommend an adherence to an arrangement which I believe to be likely to be so disastrous a one to this Colony, as that which it is now ordered should be carried out.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. the Earl of Carnarvon.

G. GREY.