

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE NEW ZEALAND COMMISSIONERS RELATIVE TO EMPLOYMENT OF IMPERIAL TROOPS.

No. 1.

INSTRUCTIONS for the COMMISSIONERS to England.

THE Commissioners will understand that they are sent to communicate with the Imperial Government on two subjects indicated by Resolutions of the Legislature.

1. The first is to treat with the Imperial Government for the services of an Imperial force, not exceeding 1,000 men, for a period not exceeding five years. The Commissioners will explain to Her Majesty's Government that the object for which such a force is desired by the Colony is to impress the Native mind with the feeling that the Imperial Government still extends its protection to the Colony, and recognizes it as a part of the British Empire. Further, because, if stationed in localities which are the keys of the settled country, such force will not only be a symbol of British power in the eyes of the Natives, but an actual means of military protection, affording rallying points for the local forces, whose operations may be of a more mobile and active character. And further, because an Imperial force will present a type of discipline and military control which cannot fail to have a most important and beneficial effect on the organization of a local force, however different a system of organising such a force the circumstances of the Colony may render advisable.

The Commissioners will negotiate with the Imperial Government as to the terms on which such Imperial force will be stationed in the Colony. They will endeavour to secure the most favourable terms which the Imperial Government may be willing to grant. They will bring under the attention of the Imperial Government the fact that Legislative provision has been made by the Parliament of New Zealand enabling the Commissioners to bind the Colony for five years to such terms as may be agreed upon between Her Majesty's Government and themselves, as the Representatives of the Colony; and they will recall to the recollection of the Imperial Government the various Despatches of Her Majesty's Secretaries of State, in which it has been intimated that military assistance might be given on condition of the Colony contributing towards the cost—a rule which prevails at present with reference to a large number of British Colonies. They will fully represent the special circumstances of this Colony, and its peculiar claims on the sympathy of the Imperial Government, and also that the withdrawal, at this critical time, of all Imperial troops is not a mere negation of aid to the Colonists, but a positive encouragement to the rebels, and injurious to the Colonists and to those of the Natives who are loyal to the Crown.

The Commissioners will not consider themselves at liberty to pledge the Colony to pay for, or contribute towards, the cost of an Imperial force of more than 1,000 men; or to agree with the Imperial Government for stationing in the Colony more than that number. Any negotiations in that direction must be expressly subject, so far as the Colony is concerned, to the special sanction of the General Assembly.

2. The Commissioners will confer with the Imperial Government, and such military and other authorities as they may have access to, and, if necessary, will take evidence on the question of what description of local force may be most suitable for service in the Colony, under Colonial control; such force being in addition to and beyond any Imperial force.

The Commissioners will endeavour to obtain such assistance as they may be able to obtain from the Imperial Government towards the organization of such local force as may be determined on, either by drafts from the Imperial army, from any of the Constabulary forces of Great Britain and Ireland, from the Indian regular or irregular troops, or otherwise, as on a full inquiry by the Commissioners may be deemed most desirable. Also, to arrange with the Imperial Government for the creation and maintenance of a dépôt (if considered desirable by the Commissioners) for the collection, enrolment, and discipline of such local force. The Legislature has authorized the expenditure of not exceeding £70,000 a year for three years, in the organization and maintenance of such local force as here indicated. It must, however, be distinctly understood that no expenditure of, or liability on account of, this £70,000 is to be incurred within the current financial year, and that that amount, during any of the three subsequent financial years, is to be, so far as the present intention of the Legislature is known, not an addition to, but an actual part of the ordinary annual vote for Defence Purposes. Thus, any force enrolled in next financial year, in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere out of the Colony, under the £70,000 authority, would necessitate a *pro tanto* reduction of the force at that time employed in the Colony, which latter force would have to be diminished to such an extent as to admit of the other addition without occasioning during that financial year any excess of the then appropriation for a Colonial force. This mutual adjustment will require ample notice from the Commissioners to the New Zealand Government of all steps taken by them, or by those under their directions, for the enrolment of men, or incurring of expenditure, or liability, under the authority in question. It is also a matter for the consideration of the Commissioners, after careful inquiry, whether any part of this sum of £70,000 should be expended. The Government will not fetter that consideration, though, as at present advised, the Government think the enrolment from abroad of disciplined and well-conducted men desirable, inasmuch as it would add to the population of the Colony, and obviate the delay and expense of disciplining recruits here, and the subtraction of so much Colonial industrial power.